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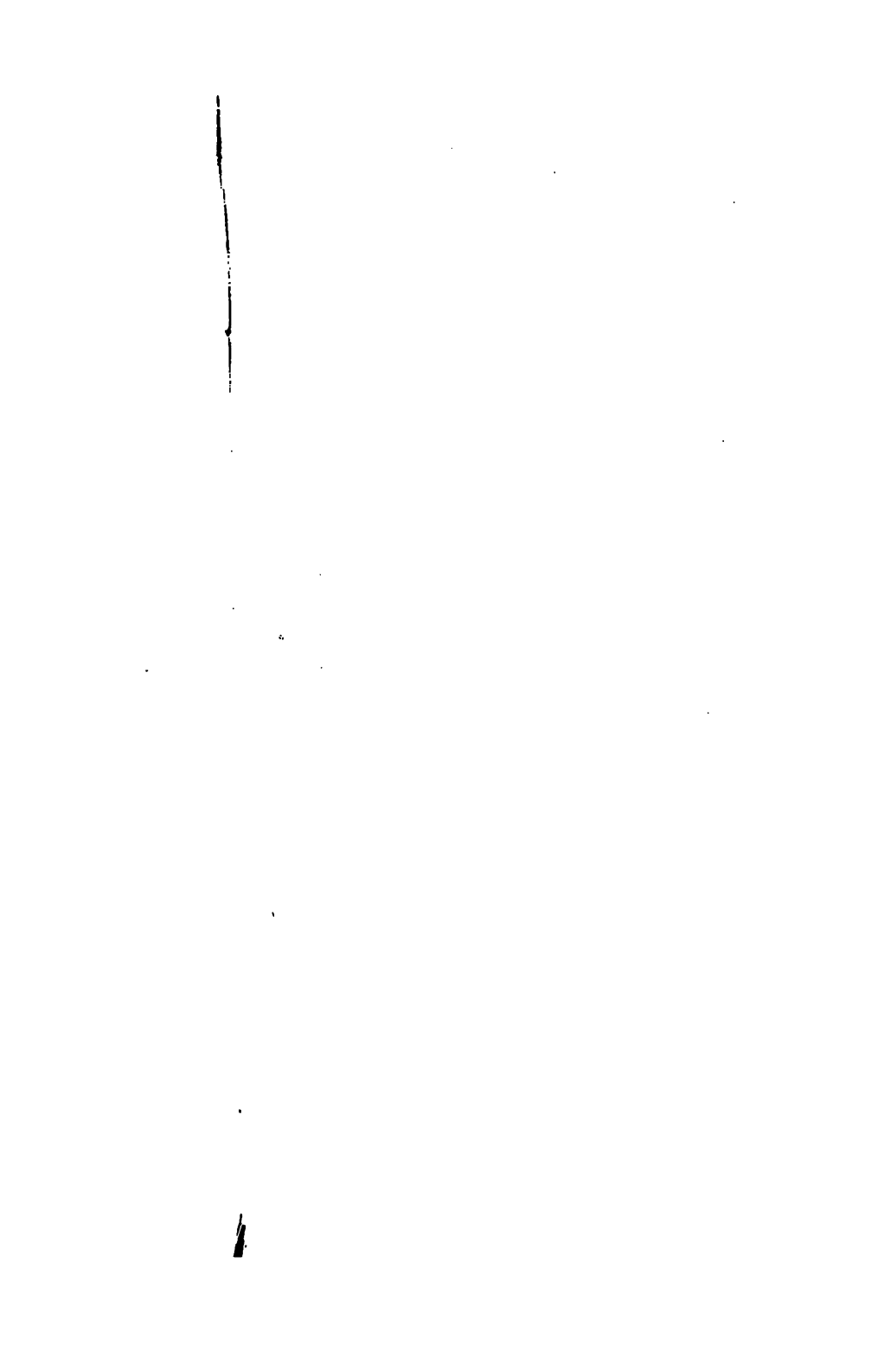
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CELESTINE CORNERS



ELLEN DOUGLAS DELAND







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By Ellen Douglas Deland

Clyde Corners

The Waring Girls

Cyntra

Country Cousins

The Fortunes of Phoebe

The Girls of Dudley School

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

Publishers

New York

CLYDE CORNERS



— Edward (not me)

"Somebody coming," said Tony in a whisper

[P.]

CLYDE CORNERS

BY

ELLEN DOUGLAS DELAND

AUTHOR OF "CYNTRA," "THE WARING GIRLS," "COUNTRY COUSINS,"
"THE GIRLS OF DUDLEY SCHOOL," "THE FORTUNES OF PHOEBE," ETC

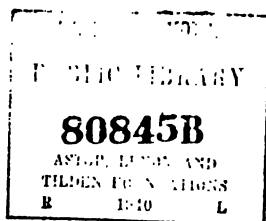


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CLYDE CORNERS

CHAPTER I

MISS BROWN ENTERS

WHEN Elizabeth Clyde was nearly seventeen she came home from boarding school, and people realized then for the first time how unlike her mother she was. She had always been "a quiet little thing," but it had rather been taken for granted that two years at boarding school would have the desired result and that she would return to Clyde Corners the gay, capable and generally effective young woman who would make an appropriate and desirable companion for Mrs. Anthony Clyde.

But it was not to be. Elizabeth was shy, quiet and unobtrusive. She dreaded going into society and was only too thankful to know that she need not face the ordeal for another year. She hoped that some unforeseen event—she did not specify

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exactly what—might take place that would defer it even longer. In the meantime her mother's active brain was devising plans for Elizabeth's future, and being an enterprising, energetic person who never acknowledged that failure was possible, she was leaving no stone unturned. Boarding school not having accomplished what Mrs. Clyde had hoped for, Elizabeth was now to go for a year to the Sedgwick School in New York, where she would come in contact with only "the nicest girls." As there were a few Clyde Corners girls who were pupils at this well-known school, she would have companions on the daily trip.

Mrs. Clyde decided also that a governess in the house would be desirable. As Elizabeth was a good student and really seemed to care for books, why not encourage her to be intellectual! Then, too, the younger girls were becoming hard to manage, and she herself was an extremely busy person. She determined to look about for a governess as soon as she could find time, and she mentioned to one or two of her friends that she was thinking of this before it occurred to her to announce it to her family. Her husband having died some years

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ago, leaving her with plenty of money, she was not in the habit of consulting other people. She did just what she wished to do always.

The Clydes of Clyde Corners lived on Garland Street, the main road leading to the Palisades. The house was at a little distance back from the road, and one entered the place, which was surrounded by a high fence of wrought iron, through great iron gates with stone posts. These gates always stood open, but they gave the house an air of dignified seclusion which was heightened by the groups of spruce and cedar trees which shaded the lawn.

The house, built in what might be termed the "middle period" of American architecture, was of dark stone, and was therefore somewhat gloomy in appearance, and its towers and turrets and tall narrow windows added to this effect. It looked not unlike an old castle. But this was forgotten when one entered, for the furniture and hangings had been chosen by Mrs. Anthony Clyde, and were therefore in the gayest, if not always the best possible taste. Bright chintzes, gilt chairs, old rose curtains, extremely impressionistic pictures, and a thousand other things combined within to coun-

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teract the depression that was perhaps caused by the exterior. The only dark and ancient object to be seen was the portrait of the first Anthony Clyde—the first, that is, whom it was worth while to remember.

Before his time the family had been small farmers, and the little river which flowed through their meadows had taken his name. Clyde's River it was called, and as the narrow cart road which led up from the farm connected at right angles with the main road to New York, the corner thus formed came to be known as Clyde's Corner. Gradually a cluster of houses grew up there which became a hamlet, and then a village and a town, and its name was now Clyde Corners and the little stream was still the Clyde River.

The first Anthony Clyde had departed from his farm to fight for his country in the War of the Revolution, where he distinguished himself to such a degree that the surrender of Cornwallis left him a Major, and as such he was always known. His descendant's wife had always felt grateful that he had the foresight to have his portrait painted. It hung in her library, rather darkened by time to be sure, but with a kindly shadow which only served

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to soften into partial obscurity his somewhat plain features. Fortunately his ruffled shirt-front and heavy gold watch fob were still visible, thus proving to the present Mrs. Anthony the social position of her children's ancestor. Mrs. Clyde herself came from Philadelphia.

There was one son, Anthony, usually known as Tony, who was older than Elizabeth and who was at Harvard, and there were two younger girls, Dorothy and Lucy. They were so nearly of the same age, there being but two years between them, that they were constantly together and had the same friends, their chief companion being Mildred Waring, who lived down on Lyman Street, and who was thought to be the best sort of a chum because she always had ideas. Her latest was the "Spy Game," which was not old-fashioned "I Spy" as one would suppose, but an up-to-date, thrilling pastime in which one person took the part of a German spy, another was the Innocent Victim, and the rest of the party were Secret Service men. Even George Waring, Junior, Mildred's younger brother, would sometimes condescend to play with the girls in this game, and it was especially exciting when he did

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few more moments of it before night actually fell, and she wished the room to look bright and cheerful for the friend whom she was expecting to tea. The table had been drawn up before the fire and the kettle was singing. Mrs. Clyde was out, and the children had not yet come home. They were coasting down the hill at the back of the house with half a dozen boys and girls whose merry shouts rang out on the frosty air as they trudged up the hill and started again for "just one more!"

Elizabeth Clyde's face was the subject of some discussion among her friends. Was she pretty, or was she not? It made some difference, they were apt to say, if she were speaking. When she was quiet and her face was still she was not especially pretty, although her features were good, for all the life seemed to have left them and she had little color, but when she spoke all was changed. As Juliet Waring put it, "Why should anyone stop to think whether Elizabeth is pretty or not? It isn't of the slightest consequence. You know her, and you just watch her face to see it when she is going to say something. You can see her spirit in it then."

It was Juliet whom Elizabeth was

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that afternoon. Elizabeth had always lived at Clyde Corners—she was born in that very house—but the Warings had moved there from New York about two years ago. The two girls had not met until rather recently, for Elizabeth had been at boarding school and then away during the summer, but their friendship had taken instant root at their first meeting and had shown steady growth ever since, for the two had much in common. One thing was their love of books, and there were other, deeper instincts and likings which drew them and held them together. Juliet and Tony Clyde, however, had been friends for a long time.

When the bell rang Elizabeth went to open the door herself. "I couldn't wait for Catherine," she explained, "for she is always so slow about getting here. Why are you so late, Juliet? The kettle is boiling and everything ready, and I want to see your cousin's sketches. Have you brought them with you? He must be a wonder—why, is some one else out there? Do come in, whoever it is!" She tried to finish her sentence as cordially as she had begun it, but she was painfully shy, and she had not the slightest idea as to whom she

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was addressing, for the person, whoever it was, remained standing in the shadow beyond the storm door which opened upon the porch. Juliet Waring stepped back to allow her companion to enter first, and Elizabeth's face showed her surprise when a young woman, whom she had never before seen, crossed the threshold into the brilliantly lighted vestibule and then came into the house.

"How do you do?" said Elizabeth, but her face was grave and her manner stiff; then with an effort to be more cordial, she added: "I am glad to see you, for of course you are a friend of Juliet's."

"I beg your pardon," said the stranger—it was a girl not many years older than they were themselves—"but I do not know your friend. I met her a few minutes ago and asked her the way to your house, and she told me she was coming here herself, and very kindly brought me. I—I am only a governess looking for a position. I heard that Mrs. Anthony Clyde was inquiring about one and I have ventured to come to see her instead of writing or telephoning. I suppose she is your mother, is she not? Is she at home?"

She had a pleasing voice, and her way of speaking reminded Juliet of her sister Cyntra, who had

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lived in England. The girl was as tall as Juliet was herself, and more slender. Elizabeth was small, and she stood looking up at the stranger. Her face still showed some surprise.

"Why, I didn't know Mamma was thinking of having a governess!" she said. "She isn't at home now, but I think she will come before very long, so you must come in and wait. Perhaps you would like a cup of tea. You must be tired if you walked all the way up from the station."

She led the way into the library, wondering as she did so if her mother was really planning to have a governess. It might very easily be the case, although nothing had been said to her about it. She felt chiefly sorry that the anticipated chat alone with Juliet was not to take place, but she gave no hint of this in her manner. She drew the chairs nearer to the fire and rang the bell for the maid to bring in the hot toast, while she herself proceeded to make the tea.

Juliet Waring, meanwhile, was studying the new-comer. Juliet was one who was always interested in people. She enjoyed guessing at their characteristics and discovering later how nearly right she had been. Her father was an author,

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and she intended, indeed she had already begun, to write herself, which probably accounted for her intense interest in human nature. She saw that the young woman appeared to be perfectly at ease in what was undoubtedly a somewhat trying situation. She was far less embarrassed than was Elizabeth. She drew off her gloves, thus showing her hands. There was strength in those hands, Juliet decided. They looked capable of doing things. Her face, in which at first a faint color had glowed, almost immediately became pale. Her skin was clear but of a strange whiteness, the effect of which was heightened by the large black hat which completely covered her hair. She looked tired, and Juliet, while not at first exactly liking her, felt sorry for her, for her face was sad. She was no doubt worried about money matters, and anxious to get this position. Probably she was very poor, and it therefore was important that she should find something to do at once, and that was why she had come out to see Mrs. Clyde without waiting to hear from her more definitely. It seemed strange to Juliet that Elizabeth had not heard of her mother's intention, for the Warings



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were in the habit of talking things over together when any new step was planned.

The girl meantime accepted her cup of tea and her little napkin and plate without a sign of embarrassment. "I am very hungry," she said, with the faint rolling of the R which again reminded Juliet of Cyntra. "How good you are to give me tea! And although I know that you must be Miss Clyde, you don't know my name, do you? It is Brown, Frederica Brown. And will you now tell me yours?" She smiled as she turned to Juliet.

"Oh, that is Miss Waring, Miss Brown!" interposed Elizabeth. "I beg your pardon for forgetting to introduce you! Coming in together, as you did, made me feel as if you and Juliet must already know each other. Oh, there come the children!"

The side door was closed with a bang and there was a commotion in the hall.

"Don't tell them what I have come for!" said Miss Brown hastily, in a low voice. "Let me make friends with them first!"

CHAPTER II

THE FIRE

DOROTHY and Lucy came into the room with a rush. They were still in their out-door things, and their cheeks glowed with color from exercise; they seemed to be full to overflowing with health and high spirits. Dorothy threw her mittens into the air, and they fell into a bowl of flowers which stood on one of the tables. Lucy ran to get them out and with quick and dexterous aim tossed them into the midst of the tea-party. They knocked over Miss Brown's cup, which was fortunately empty; she caught it before it fell, picked up the wet mittens and placed them on the fender to dry, and then turned to the children.

"Excellent aim!" she said calmly. "You could not have done it better if you had tried. I should like a game of ball with you sometime, but not here among the tea cups."

The children for a moment stood perfectly still.

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For once they were really frightened. They had supposed that the guests were two of Elizabeth's friends, and here was a stranger, and a grown up one at that. What had they better do? But it was certainly very funny. Who could help laughing? So they just stood there and giggled.

"I am ashamed of you!" exclaimed Elizabeth, really distressed. "There is nothing to laugh at. You make me feel like crying."

"Oh, they only meant it for a joke," said Miss Brown, "and of course they never supposed those mittens would ever reach my cup, did you, girls? They are your sisters, Miss Clyde? And what are their names?"

"Dorothy and Lucy, and I think they——"

"Oh, that is all right! They didn't mean to be rude, I am sure. Dorothy and Lucy, was the coasting good, and have you had a good time? Were many out this afternoon? And where do you coast? There seem to be a great many hills here, but I suppose one hill is considered better than another. It used to be when I went coasting in England, oh, so long ago!"

She turned to them with an air of such particular interest that the children drew nearer. In a

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few minutes the three were absorbed in conversation. Elizabeth exchanged a glance with Juliet, and decided to leave them undisturbed, and it was not long before a motor car was heard approaching the house. The door of the car was slammed, the automobile moved off, and some one rang the doorbell. Presently Mrs. Clyde, small, slight, youthful in appearance and exquisitely dressed, came into the room. She glanced about as she drew off her gloves and removed her fur coat.

"Ah, you are having tea! I am so glad!" she said in a high, crisp voice. "Give me some, Elizabeth dear. It was a large meeting, and though there was tea afterward, of course it was wretched. Juliet, I'm glad to see you, and—" She turned to the stranger with a welcoming hand: "And I'm glad to see you too! Now tell me who it is!"

"This is Miss Brown, Mamma," said Elizabeth hastily, and much embarrassed. It was something of an ordeal for her to introduce people, especially to her mother who was critical in such matters. "She wants—she has come—this is my mother, Miss Brown. Mamma—" She hesitated, not knowing just what to say. But Miss Brown explained her presence with complete self-possession. She

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had risen when Mrs. Clyde entered the room.

"I heard that you wish to engage a governess, Mrs. Clyde," she said, "and I should like very much to apply for the position, or at least to talk it over with you. I thought it would be more satisfactory to come and see you instead of writing or telephoning. I did not intend to be so late, but I made a mistake about trains, and I missed the earlier one."

"I see," said Mrs. Clyde, "but it is just as well, as I was not at home. Sit down again, won't you? Very good of you to come and see me, but I must have some tea before I can say a word. Elizabeth dear, do be a little quicker! There, you are filling it too full! Now give me a fresh saucer, darling, and try to be more careful. There is a great fire somewhere between here and New York. You can see the flames from our hill. And now, Miss—Brown, I think you said—where could you have heard that I was looking for a governess? Why, I hardly knew it myself. Things fairly fly about in this town. Children, don't bother Miss Brown! Let her have her tea in peace. Elizabeth dear, had you not better hand the little cakes? You

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forgot them, I suppose! You speak like an Englishwoman, Miss Brown. Are you English?"

"I have lived there most of my life. We came over here just at the time the war broke out, and I have not been able to go back. Some of my family live here in the States."

Juliet noticed that she had made no direct reply as to her nationality, but what she said apparently satisfied Mrs. Clyde.

"Oh, I am glad to hear it! Have you had much experience with children? They seem to like you, but then Dorothy and Lucy are only too ready to make friends with everybody! They are like those dogs, don't you know, that dash up in the most friendly way to tramps and peddlers and organ grinders. Of course the children go to school. I should just want you to help them with their lessons, and look after them generally, and be responsible for them. I am so busy I can't possibly do it myself, and now that we are expected to make all those surgical dressings in addition to all that we were doing already, I really must have some help. I should be glad, too, to have you act as my secretary at times. You could attend to my correspondence in the mornings when the

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children are at school, and perhaps—oh, there will be plenty for you to do! And what references have you? I naturally must be particular about that. What are your references?"

At this question Juliet turned to Elizabeth and began a conversation on the first topic that occurred to her, which happened to be the snow-storm, and the two girls discussed it gravely and with close attention to detail. Presently Elizabeth glanced at her mother, and seeing that both she and Miss Brown were absorbed in their discussion of details, she said in a low voice: "How perfectly calm and cool that girl is! If I were in her place, how I should hate to come to a strange house and ask some one like Mamma to take me as a governess. I should be so frightened! I think she is a perfect wonder, and I do hope Mamma will decide to take her!"

And Juliet agreed with her, for she had already become interested in the stranger, and she liked the little she had seen of her.

Presently Miss Brown rose to go. In spite of the many questions which she had been obliged to answer, and the general awkwardness of the situation, she still appeared to be perfectly self-

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possessed. "If you will be good enough to think it over, Mrs. Clyde, and will let me know, I shall be very much obliged," she said. She turned to say good-by to the girls and found that Juliet was also leaving. They went out of the house together, and on passing through the gates they turned to go down the hill.

"That looks as if it were a big fire," said Juliet, "and it must be on the direct road to New York. I hope you won't be delayed in getting to town."

They talked on various topics until they reached Lyman Street. At the corner Juliet said good-by and turned toward her own house. "I hope we shall meet again," she said cordially, "and if you come to the Clydes' we certainly shall, and that will be nice. Let me know if I can do anything for you, won't you? I hope you won't have any trouble in getting home to-night on account of the fire. This is Lyman Street, and we live about half a mile down that way, but you go straight down this street that we are on to the station. Good-by, Miss Brown, and good luck to you! I hope you will get home safely and on time!"

As Juliet turned into Lyman Street, the bright light from an electric lamp on the corner fell full

THE FIRE

upon Frederica Brown's face. The expression of her eyes was so strange, the face was so pale, that Juliet paused involuntarily. What could be the matter with this girl? Was it possible that she was unhappy at home? Or had she no home and family? Juliet hesitated; she looked after her, walked a few steps, and then decided. She turned, and running down Garland Street a short distance, she soon overtook Frederica.

"Miss Brown," she called as she ran, "just wait one minute! If there is any trouble on the road, and you find that you can't get through to New York to-night, do please let me know, won't you? You can telephone me. Our number is Clyde Corners 360, and my father's name is George Waring. But I hope for your own sake you won't have any trouble!"

"How kind and good you are!" exclaimed the stranger. Then she added impulsively, "How I wish that it were to your house that I might possibly go as governess! You are so friendly and—and—not in any way stiff! I thank you, Miss Waring! I know that I stand but little chance of being engaged by a lady like Mrs. Clyde—I, who have only my English friend's letter and certificate

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to depend upon for reference. But I am hoping to find a position somewhere, that I may earn my own living, and be dependent no longer upon my—my relatives.”

“I think that is fine,” said Juliet warmly. Her manner was always frank and open, and Frederica Brown, awed by her interview with Mrs. Clyde, and supposing, as was perhaps natural, that Elizabeth had been stiff and haughty rather than merely shy, felt that she had unexpectedly found a real friend.

“How good and kind you are!” she exclaimed again.

As the two girls parted Frederica wished that it were not necessary to deceive Miss Waring, for she felt sure that Juliet was strictly truthful herself, and that she probably expected others to be the same. She sighed as she thought of Rudolph, for it would not do for it to become known that he was her brother-in-law. She longed to escape from him and from her sister. She knew that he was especially interested in a certain Mr. George Waring, and she wondered if this could be his daughter whom she had met. She remembered that within the last day or two her brother-in-law had

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mentioned having received a letter in regard to a Mr. George Waring from some one of great importance, and he had been so proud of the fact that he had not been able to refrain from alluding to it in her presence. She wondered what he would say when she told them at home that she had met a Miss Waring.

She arrived at the station and found that no trains could get through to New York. The fire was in a large factory not far from the railroad, and the heat was so intense that the tracks had already become warped. She decided to go by trolley, but on looking with some misgiving in her purse, she found that she had only her return ticket and two pennies. What should she do now? She turned away from the station and walked slowly up the street by which she had come.

When Juliet Waring reached home she found the family in the living-room, as was usual at that hour of the day. It was the very best hour in the opinion of all the Warings. The room was pleasant and restful, cheerful in the lamplight, but not too bright for comfort. Mr. Waring, the day's work over, was reading the evening paper, occasionally looking over the top of it to exchange an

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amused glance with his wife, or to throw a remark into the conversation which was carried on almost without pause by Mildred and George with their mother. Juliet was less talkative than Mildred, but she was by no means silent. She came into the room now with the air of having had an adventure. This was instantly observed by Mildred who, at the age of "almost thirteen," allowed little that was done by her elders to escape her careful attention.

"What's up, Ju?" she asked. She was knitting socks with great energy, but her industry did not prevent her from using her eyes elsewhere. In fact it was only necessary for her to look at her work when she was turning a heel or finishing a toe, so expert a knitter had she become. Her fingers flew, her needles gleamed, and her stocking grew, while her eyes and her tongue were as busy as her fingers.

"Why should you think anything is up?" was Juliet's reply. She sometimes chose to be what Mildred called "aggravating."

"Because you look that way, doesn't she, mother? I can always tell. You've had some sort

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of an adventure, and you may as well tell us right straight off what it was."

"Well, you are right, for it was a sort of an adventure."

"Good!" cried Mildred, much elated. Her face, surrounded by a mass of curly golden hair, expressed the alertness of her nature. She was a thin, slender child, and one who was perpetually in action. Her hair was apt to fall over her face and her big blue eyes peering out from beneath it allowed little to escape their penetrating gaze. "George, you had better listen, for it may be—you know what!"

"Shucks!" said George.

"But it may be!" persisted Mildred. "You never can tell."

They both would have been glad to pursue the argument further, but Juliet had begun her story, and therefore a withering glance was the only reply that George allowed himself for the present.

"I was coming down from Cyntra's when I met her on the hill," she was saying. "She had passed the Clydes' entrance and would have gone on up the hill looking for the house, but fortunately she asked me. Elizabeth asked her to come in and

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wait as her mother was out, and she had tea with us. Elizabeth hadn't the least idea that her mother was looking for a governess."

"And what happened next?" asked Mildred, intently interested. "What did Dot and Lucy do when they came in?"

"What did they do? What didn't they do! They came rushing into the room and threw their mittens into the bowl of roses and then into Miss Brown's cup. They behaved awfully, as usual, and then Mrs. Clyde came home, and pretty soon Miss Brown and I came away. I left her at the corner of Lyman Street and told her how to get to the station, and I came home, but I almost feel as if I ought to have walked down there with her. I am so sorry for her; I don't know exactly why, except that she looked so tired and so sort of hungry. I don't mean for food. I don't believe she is hungry that way, for she didn't take her tea and things as if she were. It seemed as if she were just hungry for something human. I am sure it was that. She may not be able to get home to-night, for there is a big fire somewhere between here and New York, and there is a possibility of the trains being a good deal delayed. I think I

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ought to have gone down to the station with her and found out, but it was getting so late and I knew you would be expecting me, and so I just let her go alone, but I gave her our telephone number, and told her to let us know if she found the trains weren't running. Now if the telephone rings and she asks where she shall go for the night, what shall we say? I have a very strong suspicion that she hasn't much money. It isn't that she is shabby, for she was very decently dressed, but she seemed so sort of forlorn."

"Poor girl!" said Mrs. Waring. "I wonder if she has no family—no one to look after her? Imagine one of our daughters in that predicament, George! It makes me sad even to think of it."

"Don't think of it," said Mr. Waring. "Your daughters are all perfectly safe, and this young woman may not be as unhappy as Juliet thinks. It is no such misfortune to be obliged to work, and she may want to teach from mere love of it. Juliet, being an ardent inventor of fiction, like her Dad, is liable to be led very far away by her lively imagination. Don't I know? Doesn't she get it straight from her 'pa'? It isn't worth while, Juliet, my dear! If you let yourself go, you won't

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last as long as I have, nor be able to write half as many books—which on the whole may be just as well! Of course, my dear, I am alluding to my own books, not yours!”

“Dad, darling, you needn’t cast any slurs on your books, and you needn’t try to make us think you are so hard-hearted about that girl. We all know that you would have taken the coat off your back and the shoes off your feet to give them to her if necessary, as you have done many and many a time, and if you had seen Miss Brown you would feel just as I do about her.”

“From your description of the lady I should judge that she is too stylish for my coat and too slender for my shoes. She might enjoy my supper, however, and if she is hungry I would gladly share it with her, but I doubt if she is. Some people look hungry after a seven-course dinner. It’s the type that does it. I know ’em—lots of ’em! Pale, languid, pathetic eyes, and all that stuff. You said her eyes had a pathetic look, didn’t you?”

“Yes—sort of!”

“Precisely! And she wore a wan smile, or you being a young and therefore a modern novelist,

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Juliet, would you call it a wry or a crooked smile? There are such quantities of crooked smiles floating about in novels just at present! And was there a droop to the corners of her mouth, and a kind of all-the-world-against-me air? It doesn't always mean as much as you think, my dear child!"

"I just wish you could see her!" protested Juliet. "It is a good thing that we all know you so intimately, father, or we should think you a regular ogre. I *wish* you could see her for yourself!"

And as if in answer to her wish, the doorbell rang.

CHAPTER III

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

WILL you open the door, Georgie?" said Mrs. Waring. "Jennie is busy getting supper."

George Junior went to the front door. Juliet, drawn by an irresistible impulse, followed him. She was perfectly sure that she should find Miss Brown on the porch, and she was not mistaken.

"Is this Mr. Waring's house?" asked Miss Brown. "Oh, Miss Waring, I had to come after all! No trains are running to New York. I didn't know what to do. You told me to telephone, but I—I—I did not know just where to go to do it—and—and—it was easier to come and speak to you and—and ask you where I had better go, for—I—that is——" She hesitated, apparently much embarrassed. She did not cross the threshold, but stood without in the dark porch. The light from the Warings' hall shone directly upon her face as it had at the Clydes', and Juliet was

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again touched by her expression, in spite of what her father had said.

"I am so glad you did!" she exclaimed cordially. "You were quite right to come here. Please come in. We are just going to have supper, and I hope you will stay and have it with us. Please do!"

"Oh, how good you are! But I hardly like to do that. I—I didn't mean to intrude upon your supper. I—" she looked from Juliet to George and Mildred. Mildred was standing in the doorway of the living-room, knitting and staring. George continued to hold the front door wide open until Juliet told him to close it. As he obeyed, he exchanged a meaning glance with Mildred.

"It may be!" he said in a low voice. Then going nearer to his younger sister he added: "Watch out!"

Juliet drew Miss Brown into her father's study, which was on the opposite side of the hall from the living-room. There was no light there, but she found the matches and lighted the green-shaded lamp on the study table. Mr. Waring's papers, piles of manuscript, proof sheets from the printers, typewriter, books, pamphlets, all lay scattered about in seeming confusion; but it was

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a charming room, nevertheless, and this was not lost upon the stranger. She gave a rapid glance about, her face lighting up with interest. Then the momentary animation died away, and the sad, forlorn look came back.

"I am so sorry to trouble you," she said; "I feel so mortified, but I am obliged to ask you to lend me two dollars! I found that I had only two or three cents in my purse! That is the reason I could not telephone to you. I bought my return ticket to New York, and it took all that I had with me to buy it when I left New York, and now I can't go back that way, for no trains are running. The fire is in a large factory near one of the stations between here and New York, and the railroad is blocked, and they say it will be for hours. I haven't even enough money to go back by the trolley car, and even if I had, they may not be running either. I didn't know what to do except to come here. You were so very kind! You know you told me to let you know if I needed help, and I had no one else to ask. I could not go back to Mrs. Clyde's, for I felt—ah, I would so much rather ask you! You seem like a friend. It gave me a strange feeling to walk through the town,

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past all the houses, and feel that I knew no one in them—but I should be used to that! I could see into some of the houses, for the shades were up. They looked so comfortable! And then I met some boys and asked where you lived, and when I found it was near, I came, for you were kind to me. I knew that you would tell me of a decent place to go for the night, and would lend me the money to pay for it. I will return it immediately—indeed I will! You can trust me, Miss Waring.”

“Why, of course I can trust you! I wasn’t thinking of that.” Juliet’s dark eyes glowed with sympathy and friendship. “Wait a minute, please, until—until I see—until we find out what you had better do. Excuse me a minute, please.”

She went to the other room and partly closed the door as she entered. In the meantime, George stepped into the study, bowed with great politeness to the stranger, and seated himself in his father’s chair at the table. He opened a book with some ostentation, and appeared to become deeply interested in it immediately. Mildred hesitated, unable to decide which room would afford her the greater interest. She wished to see more of the

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lady, but she ardently desired also to know what Juliet and her parents were saying, but before she could make up her mind, Juliet and her mother came out of the living-room and crossed the hall to the study.

Mrs. Waring went forward with her hand held out in cordial greeting. "You must stay and have supper with us," she said in her pleasant way. "My daughter tells me that you can't get back to town to-night. We will have supper, and then we can decide what you had better do. Juliet, take Miss Brown up to your room. It will rest you to take off your hat, Miss Brown. Supper will be ready soon, but don't hurry. We have the whole evening before us."

"Oh, how very kind you are!" said the girl, in a low voice. "I didn't expect anything half so kind!" She followed Juliet upstairs. "Is this your room?" she asked, looking about with interest. "What a charming room!"

"Yes, it is a nice room," said Juliet, pleased with her admiration. "I haven't had it very long. This room was my sister's, and mine was at the back, but my sister was married last spring, and

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so I moved in here. I like it all the more because it was hers."

"You have a married sister? What is her name?"

"Cyntra, and oddly enough her last name is still Waring, for my brother-in-law's name is just like my father's, except that he has a middle name and father hasn't. They are both named George Waring, but my brother-in-law is always called Jimmie, or Jim."

"Yes, I understood you to say that your father's name was George Waring. Then is he the well-known banker?"

"No, that is my brother-in-law's father. My father is an author. The name being the same makes great confusion, especially now that Jimmie has come into our family." A faint wonder was in her mind at Miss Brown's evident interest in the family connections, but she supposed it was meant for politeness, and thought no more about it. Presently they went downstairs.

Frederica Brown looked entirely different without her hat. Her hair was a dark auburn, really a deep red, and grew low upon her forehead in a point. It was thick and smooth; there was no

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wave in it, and she wore it in heavy braids wound about her head and almost on her forehead. It was a quaint style that was becoming to her. She was simply dressed in a dark silk blouse with an open collar of white, and a dark cloth skirt that matched her blouse. Juliet liked her appearance; there was nothing in the least conspicuous about it, and nothing shabby, although her clothes were inexpensive. Her manner also was all that it should be. She was neither aggressive nor retiring; she was perfectly at ease, but with no unpleasant assumption of independence. She was in a way attractive—and yet, Juliet, as she went downstairs, found herself wondering what her father's opinion of Miss Brown would be. She hoped he would like her.

“Dad is so funny about people, you never can tell,” she said to herself. “He seems to see through them—or he thinks he does! He does take such dreadful prejudices, dear old Dad!”

Whatever Mr. Waring may have thought, he gave no outward sign of any doubt or disapproval of the unexpected visitor. His manner was just what it usually was to the friends of his children, whom he always made welcome, especially

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when they came to his table. Both he and Mrs. Waring did all that was in their power to put Miss Brown at ease and make her feel that they were glad to have her with them. They all talked freely on all sorts of subjects, with the exception of George Junior. He maintained an unusual and a watchful silence, but as he was merely a boy of eleven or thereabouts, and as Miss Brown had never seen him before and was therefore ignorant of his powers as a conversationalist, his extreme quietness did not make the impression upon her that it did upon Mildred. Nothing escaped Mildred, and while she enjoyed her supper, her eyes and her mind were active. She knew that George thought—well, something very thrilling, and he might or might not be right. Time alone would show, and in the meantime what was this that her mother was saying? And did father approve of the lady? Father was carving another slice of meat for Miss Brown, and you could not tell whether he approved or not. His face wore that funny expression it sometimes had when he was going to let mother go her own way and see for herself how things would turn out. Mildred was almost—but not quite—sure that father did

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not wholly approve, so she listened attentively to mother.

When supper was over and they rose from the table, Mr. Waring signaled to his wife to wait a minute while the others went back to the living-room. "I suppose you are planning to ask her to stay all night," he said.

"Well, what do you think about it? Should we feel comfortable if we did not?"

"A pretty reason for a bit of hospitality!" he replied. "But it may be the underlying cause of much charity—to make us feel more comfortable ourselves!"

"Don't stop now to study the psychology of it, George dear! Shall we or shall we not ask the girl to stay?"

"As it is a foregone conclusion that you are going to do so—I can see that very plainly—by all means, yes! You have made up your mind, and nothing that I can say will change you. She is all right, I've no doubt, and yet——" He hesitated.

"Do you think we had better lock up the teaspoons?" asked Mrs. Waring, laughing at him.

"No, it isn't a case of the teaspoons. I would

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willingly turn her loose beside the open silver chest. She wouldn't steal our spoons, but—she isn't quite open, my dear. She is hiding something. I should like to see the letter she showed Mrs. Clyde as a reference. Suppose we get her to produce it if possible? In the meantime you ask her to stay all night. Yes, I really want you to. I'm getting interested. And we'll note where she telephones, for of course she will wish to reassure her family."

They returned to the living-room, and much to Juliet's satisfaction, her mother cordially invited Miss Brown to spend the night with them.

"You can't possibly get back to New York," said Mrs. Waring, "and there is not the slightest reason why you should go to a hotel or a boarding house in Clyde Corners. We have a room that we are only too glad to place at your service, so do make up your mind to stay until to-morrow morning. Juliet will lend you all you need, and will be glad to have you stay, I know."

"Yes, indeed!" said Juliet. "I was hoping mother would ask you."

Frederica Brown looked from one to the other. A faint pink came into her cheeks, and her eyes

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grew darker and warmer in color. She suddenly looked younger and less careworn.

"How good you are to me!" she said, in a low voice. "I did not know that people—people of your kind—ever did a thing like this. You do not know me—you have not even read Mrs. Bailey's note. I am glad you have not, for it makes your invitation all the more wonderful. I shall never forget it! Believe me, I shall never forget your kindness."

"And now don't you want to telephone to your people, Miss Brown?" asked Mr. Waring. "They may be worried about you by this time."

Her face changed again. It seemed as if she placed a mask over it to hide her thoughts. "They will not worry," she began; then with evident effort she made herself speak in a more natural manner. "My parents are dead, and there is—are—there is only my sister and—just my sister who would be worried, and she—she is so busy with—she hasn't much time to think about me. But I will telephone, thank you. It is a boarding house where we live, and if she is not there I can leave a message for her. Thank you very much."

Mr. Waring showed her where the telephone was

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in the hall, and having asked her if he could call up the number for her and found that she did not need his help, he went into his study. He heard her give the number, and from the name of the exchange he knew that the house that she was trying to get must be far over on the east side of the city. When she was finally connected, he heard her ask for some one whose name sounded like "Mrs. Groom." Presently he heard her say: "Oh, is that you? Yes, this is Rika. I am out of town, and I shall not be back until to-morrow. I came out to see some one this afternoon, and I cannot get back to New York because of a fire. . . . Yes, it is a factory, I believe. The trains are blocked. . . . No, I am with friends who have invited me to stay all night. . . . At Clyde Corners. . . . It is all right, Ru—I mean, it is quite all right. . . . At the house of Mr. Waring. . . . No. . . . Yes. . . . No, not the same. . . . No, I can't very well now. . . . It is impossible, I tell you! . . . No, indeed, it is not that one. I will explain it all to-morrow. . . . Ru—I mean—it is *not* the banker! Good-by!"

As she left the telephone and walked through the hall, Mr. Waring came out of his study. She

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did not look at him, and it was evident that she felt a sudden and keen embarrassment.

"My—my sister required much explanation," she said, as if in apology.

"And quite right that she should," rejoined Mr. Waring. "She would be an odd sort of sister if she did not wish to know exactly whom you are staying with. You must pardon me, but I couldn't help hearing your end of the conversation, the telephone being where it is. Your sister no doubt knows Mr. George Waring, who is the President of the Middlesex Bank. He is my daughter's father-in-law. I am almost sorry that you didn't let me speak to your sister myself. I might have been able to assure her that you are perfectly safe with us."

Frederica became less embarrassed. It had not occurred to her that her brother-in-law's questions—for it had been he who had answered her and not her sister—might be taken as a matter of course, and evidently she had not made the slip in using his name that she feared she had. She hesitated an instant; then she said gravely: "You are certainly very kind. I can see the kind of people that you are, but you have taken me into your

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household without knowing the slightest thing about me. If you will allow me, I should like to show you Mrs. Bailey's letter—my friend in England, with whom I lived for a long time. It is upstairs in my bag. I will get it."

"Why, it isn't necessary, Miss Brown!"

"Please allow me to get it. I shall feel more comfortable."

She ran upstairs and Mr. Waring entered the living-room. He walked over to where his wife was sitting and leaned over her. "She is probably all right," he said in a low voice. "The sister answered the telephone, and she evidently wanted to know all about us. Her name is Mrs. Groom, and her first name sounded like 'Ruth.' From the girl's answers, the sister in New York seemed to be quite agitated. Speaks well for her!"

"Of course she is all right, George, and you knew it all along!"

With a smile at her superior tone, he went back to his chair and picked up his paper. He was reading it when their guest came downstairs with the note.

CHAPTER IV

MRS. CLYDE ENGAGES HER GOVERNESS

MISS Brown laid the note on the table beside which Mr. Waring was sitting. Then she sat down by Juliet.

"I am sorry I have no work," she said; "you all look so busy. If you had some extra knitting needles and some yarn, I could knit too."

"We have plenty of those things on hand," said Mrs. Waring, "for I keep a little wool shop, just across the road. But I have a ball of yarn all wound right here in my bag, and some needles too! Suppose you do make something for the Red Cross! You might begin a sweater. They need all that we can make, for they are sending warm things to Belgium and France all the time, and before long our own men may be needing them."

Frederica made no reply, but she took the yarn and began to set up her stitches. In the meantime Mr. Waring had opened and read the note which she had given him. It was written in a large, in-

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definite handwriting, and was addressed to "Miss Frederica Brown," or so he read it. The signature was "Margaret Bailey" and the sheet of paper bore the engraved heading of a school in England.

Dear Frederica: (it ran)

I am so very sorry to hear that you are going to the States, but no doubt it is a wise move to make. You will be more comfortable there. Remember that I shall always be interested in your welfare, and shall be your friend whatever comes to pass. In these dreadful days of war one scarcely knows whom to trust, but you, I am sure, are one to be relied upon. I shall miss you here in the school, but very possibly I shall be obliged to give it up. When this terrible war is over and you perhaps come back to England, you must look me up. In the meantime you may certainly need references and I enclose one as you asked. Surely you are a valuable teacher and a dear good girl.

Affectionately, though sadly,
Margaret Bailey.

The enclosed paper stated that Miss Frederica Brown had been known to the writer for several years, first as pupil and then as teacher, and was especially competent to give instruction in German, French and English. It had been signed by

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Mrs. Bailey in the presence of a Notary Public, and had every sign of being a proper and legal document. There was no reason to doubt its authenticity. It was written in the same vague handwriting as that of the note.

Mr. Waring read both papers with interest. He seemed to be studying them, and Frederica, although apparently absorbed in putting on her stitches, knew that he was doing so. Presently he raised his head and looked at her.

"How do you spell your name, Miss Brown?" he asked.

There was a moment's perceptible pause. Then in a clear voice she said: "B-r-o-w-n, Mr. Waring!" Her hands shook slightly, but she continued to cast on the stitches.

"Ah, yes! Your friend's writing is rather hard to read. Thank you very much for showing them to me." He folded the papers and returned them to her, and then resumed the reading of his newspaper.

Then Mildred's clear, high voice broke the stillness. "Why, Miss Brown, how queerly you are knitting! Look, Juliet! Mother, did you ever see any one knit like that? See how fast her fingers

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go, and her needles are sort of on the wrong side of the stitches! Isn't it too funny? It must be the way some of the girls were talking about at school. They called it the German way."

Mr. Waring's paper twitched slightly. George Junior laid down his book and turned to look at Miss Brown. Mrs. Waring and Juliet both began with feverish haste to count their stitches. Mildred openly stared, but it was the hitherto silent George who put the question that was in the minds of all.

"Miss Brown, are you a German?"

Her knitting dropped for an instant into her lap. She raised her head. "No," she said, "I am not a German."

Was it Mr. Waring's imagination, or did she really pronounce it, "Cherman"? He could not tell, but the name as the English lady had written it might as easily be intended for "Braun" as "Brown." It was thus:



The Clydes breakfasted rather early, for the girls must get off to school, and Mrs. Clyde was

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fond of saying that the days were not half long enough for all that she had to do. Dorothy and Lucy had finished their breakfast and left the table when their mother opened the subject of the governess.

"I have decided to engage that Miss Brown," she announced, in the tone of finality with which Elizabeth was familiar. "I liked her appearance and her manner very much, and she is English, and speaks three languages. She came very well recommended; the paper she had from the English school was a regular legal document, and the letter was very nice. I think I shall go to town this morning about it. I will take you in, Elizabeth, if you like, for I shall try to get off early, and perhaps you would like to ask Juliet Waring to motor in with us. I want to get there as soon as possible, for I am so afraid of losing her."

The telephone had rung, and the maid came to tell Elizabeth that some one wished to speak to her. In a few minutes she returned to the dining-room.

"You won't have to go to town to find Miss Brown, Mamma," she said, "for she is still in Clyde Corners."

"Why, my dear, what do you mean?"

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"Juliet just telephoned. Miss Brown spent the night at their house. She couldn't get home on account of the trains being stopped by that fire, and she came to the house as Juliet had told her to do if there was any trouble, and they asked her to stay. Wasn't it nice of them? Juliet said she was going to town with her this morning, but I told her that I thought you wanted to speak to Miss Brown, so they will not start for the station until you telephone, if you will do it soon."

Mrs. Clyde rose hastily from the table. "What good luck!" she exclaimed. "Give me the Warnings' number, Elizabeth! I am perfectly delighted, for I am sure that Miss Brown is precisely the person that I have long had in mind as being absolutely necessary in this household."

The telephone conversation, and another personal interview later in the morning, only confirmed Mrs. Clyde in this opinion, and Miss Brown was engaged to come as governess and secretary immediately after Thanksgiving, which would occur the following week.

"I feel sure that I have done the right thing," said Mrs. Clyde to Elizabeth later in the day, "for I can always trust my intuitions. Your dear

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father always used to say that I was quite wonderful in knowing at once what a person really is. I am sure that she is quite all right, in spite of what Mrs. Waring told me of their absurd fancies that she might be a German. I went to the wool shop to ask her what she thought of her. Not that I had the slightest doubt of her myself, but I was curious to hear what they would say. To me their ideas seem quite hysterical, though Mrs. Waring has always seemed such a sensible sort of woman. It is Mr. Waring, I suspect, who has started the idea. People who write are always letting their imagination run away with them. Why, there is nothing German about her! I very cleverly led the conversation in such a way that she was obliged to pronounce the word, and she did not say 'Cherman' at all! She said it just as you or I would pronounce it. And as for her knitting, a great many people knit that way—your Aunt Marian for one, and I am sure there is nothing pro-German about her! No, it is terribly exaggerated—this fear of German spies—and I have no intention of giving in to it, but I particularly don't want it to get about Clyde Corners that the Warings are in the least suspicious of her, so

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please impress that on Juliet, Elizabeth. I said the same thing to Mrs. Waring. I shall be exceedingly annoyed if it does, for I like Miss Brown, and I am sure she is going to suit me exactly. And the best thing about her is that she has no family to call her off or distract her attention from her duties. She only has one sister, and she is married and completely absorbed in her husband, Miss Brown said. His business causes him to travel more or less, and the wife goes with him. I forgot to ask her his name or what his business is, but that is of no consequence to me. Some sort of a drummer, I suppose. They call themselves traveling men, and that is what she said he was, and that he was obliged to be constantly on the move. A very unsatisfactory sort of life, she said, and she would be glad to settle down and not have to go with them."

Frederica Brown had spoken the truth when she said this, and when on her return to the boarding house which had been their home since they came to New York, she found that once more orders had been received for her brother-in-law to "move on," she was glad for every reason that this time she would not be forced to accompany him. It was

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after twelve o'clock when she entered the gloomy old house over on the east side of the city. She hastened up the two long flights of stairs to the back room on the third floor which was her sister's. She disliked the room extremely, and after her brief stay in the Warings' house it seemed to her as she opened the door to be for some reason more dingy and common than ever. It was a dark place, and the tawdry hangings added to the gloom. Everything in the room was made to look different from what it really was. The piece of furniture which was a bed at night was a sideboard in its effect in the day time. The dressing-table was separated from its mirror that it might appear to be a cabinet, and the pincushion was put away during the day and a bronze card-receiver moved into its place, while the washstand lived in seclusion behind a screen. There were two long windows heavily draped with two sets of curtains, those next to the windows being of cheap Nottingham lace. The others were of dark crimson rep, elegantly looped back with ropes of red and gold. Olga Drumm took especial pride in those ropes. To her they were the symbols of gentility, and well

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worth the money paid for the whole room, which she considered exorbitant.

Frederica was almost afraid to open the door, for she dreaded to encounter her sister's wrath at her absence, but she saw at once that she had nothing to fear. Olga was once more absorbed in packing. She hardly listened to Frederica's explanations, and while she hurried from trunk to closet, and from closet to dressing-table, she poured forth her own story.

"We are going immediately. The orders came only this morning. Boston for the present, and then perhaps Montreal. We shall be informed later. Rudolph had a letter straight from the Embassy at Washington, if you please! Think of that! I assure you, Rika, he is beginning at last to be appreciated, and he should be! Why do you not set to work and do your packing? Why stand there staring? Do you not hear me tell you that we leave here to-morrow?"

"But not I," said Frederica slowly. "I am not going to Boston or Montreal. I have taken a position in Clyde Corners; I cannot go with you."

"What!" cried Olga, pausing for an instant in one of the rapid journeys across the room, her

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arms filled with garments, her face with its high cheek bones, large prominent teeth and long chin, resting on the top of the pile. Everything was large about Olga, and her great round eyes were fastened upon her sister with an appalling stare.

"No, I am not going with you. You will not have me to bother you any more, nor will Rudolph have to pay my board. I am going to support myself. I am to be governess at Mrs. Anthony Clyde's."

"What?" screamed Olga again. "Surely not the Mrs. Anthony Clyde whose name is always in the Sunday paper?"

"Yes."

For once the elder sister was silenced. There was actually a growing respect in her eyes as they continued to gaze at Frederica. If the child had been able to make this arrangement for herself, unaided by the superior intelligence of the head of the family, surely she was of some importance after all!

"What will Rudolph say?" she exclaimed at last.

"I don't care what he says. I am twenty-one and I prefer to support myself. I will starve,

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rather than be dependent any longer upon Rudolph."

"It is easy to talk about starving. You have never tried it. And to speak so of dear Rudolph, who——"

"I know your opinion of him, Olga. Now we had better talk business, for we haven't much time. I will stay on here until I go out to Clyde Corners. I am to begin my engagement the Monday after Thanksgiving Day, as they call it. That is on Thursday of next week. I will keep my little room upstairs until then. It will not cost me much. And one thing more, and it is of importance. After this, I spell my name B-r-o-w-n. You must remember that."

"You cannot mean it!" cried Olga. "I am shocked—but wait! Perhaps after all you may be right. We will ask Rudolph. It may be an excellent—yes—yes! B-r-o-w-n! Excellent, to be sure! You are wise beyond your years, my little Rika!"

"I simply have ordinary common sense. And I am no longer a child, Olga. I wish you would remember that I am twenty-one!"

Then she mounted to the tiny bedroom on the

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top floor which she called hers. Rudolph had until now paid her board, although unwillingly. How glad she would be to feel that she was under no further obligations to Rudolph! It was true that there had been a little money coming to her when her mother died of which he had taken charge, but he had assured her that it had long since been used, and that she was now wholly dependent upon his generosity. She earned some money by doing embroidery for one of the Fifth Avenue *lingerie* shops, but it was barely enough to buy her clothes, simple and inexpensive though they were. Fortunately she had just finished some work which would provide for her immediate needs.

She decided to move out to Clyde Corners the day after Olga and her husband left New York, although it would be several days before her duties at Mrs. Clyde's were to begin. It would be less lonely for her to pass them in the pleasant-looking boarding house in the country town where she had engaged a room, than in the dingy house on the East Side. The sisters parted with but little sign of emotion. Each felt a secret touch of relief. Rudolph did not hesitate to express his sense of satisfaction that he need no longer be re-

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sponsible for his somewhat difficult young sister-in-law, and he bade her good-by with broad smiles of good nature, but there was one remark which for the moment filled her with dismay and apprehension.

"You are going just where I would have you go," he said. "You may be very useful to us there some day."

"I intend to be useful," she replied. "I mean to be a good governess and secretary if I possibly can. I mean to support myself, and to do exactly as I like."

The fact that she was going away from them gave her the courage to say it. He looked at her sharply.

"We cannot all do as we like, neither you nor any one. You know what I mean," he said, as he turned from her.

She knew only too well. She was afraid of Rudolph.

CHAPTER V

AN INVITATION

THANKSGIVING Day that year fell on the last day of November, and the Warings were all to dine with Cyntra. Although they had lived at Clyde Corners but two years, and had gone there almost as strangers in the place, they had now a small family colony that was pleasant for all. Cyntra, the eldest daughter, was married to Jim Waring at Easter, and lived in a little house up the hill, and Nicholas Rufford, Mrs. Waring's nephew, who had married Cyntra's friend Bertha West at about the same time, was living near them. Cyntra had invited them all to dinner, and as Jim's father and mother were also coming, she had a large family party for which to plan.

Juliet went up to help her in the afternoon. Bertha offered to lend her any amount of silver and china or anything else that she might need, and Mildred begged to be allowed to wait on table.

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"I should just love to, Cyntra," she said earnestly, "and mother thinks I do it remarkably well. She always lets me do it now on Jennie's day out."

"It is perfectly dear of you, but it isn't necessary, you blessed child," said Cyntra. "I want you sitting at the table, and not waiting on it. Bertha is going to lend me her wonderful Selina, as my own treasure will be cooking the dinner. I only hope in her zeal she won't burn the turkey or scorch the soup! No, Bertha, I don't think I shall need any of your wedding presents for I have such heaps of my own that I am longing to bring out, and have never had the excuse for doing it until now. I am ever so much obliged to you, all the same, and I'll be glad if you will help me set the table. Let me see! Where shall I put you all? Oh, perhaps I had better let you all sit down anywhere you like, for we are all relations and so we'll have to sit next to our husbands and brothers and sons and cousins! We can't help ourselves. We are just eleven. It's horrid to have an uneven number, isn't it? Is there any stray person we might ask who hasn't any nice place to go to? I'd rather like to do that and make my table even at the same time. It is so late

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now that it might be hard to get anybody."

"Oh, who minds the table being uneven? And it's so much more fun being just by ourselves," said Bertha. She was a gay, vivacious young woman, very happily married, with plenty of money which her father supplied to his only daughter with a lavish hand, and with everything in the world to make her contented. She looked at matters first from her own point of view, but she could easily be persuaded to take another.

"It isn't really too late, Cyntra," said Juliet, "although it is four o'clock, for I know some one who is entirely alone and doesn't know a person in the place. I have been thinking of her all day and wondering how she was getting on."

"You mean the Clydes' governess, I suppose," said Cyntra.

"Yes. Don't you pity her all alone in a strange boarding-house? I think it would be awfully nice to ask her, don't you?"

"I suppose it would, but you know I have never even seen her. Would she mind being asked when she hasn't ever met me, much less been called on?"

"Oh, I don't believe she would mind a bit. But how about the rest of the family? Will Mr. or

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Mrs. Waring mind, or Jimmie? Of course he wouldn't, but what about his father and mother?"

"Oh, they will think it all right and very nice. Let's invite her! You don't really mind, do you, Bertha?"

"Of course not! It was rather nasty of me to object at all."

"I'll run down now and ask her," said Juliet. "You can set the table without my help, and I think you will be pretty safe in putting a place for her, for I am sure from what she said that she'll be able to come."

"You haven't asked me whether I object," said Mildred, with an offended air. "I may be the youngest sister, but I do think I ought to be consulted the least little tiny bit."

"Mildred!" exclaimed Juliet. "How silly of you!"

"You dear child!" said Cyntra. "But you can't possibly mind!"

"Stung!" cried Mildred, laughing in delight. "I just thought I'd try to get a rise out of you, and I sure did! Of course I don't mind, for I want to see for myself what Dot and Lucy Clyde

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are to be let in for, and also whether George and I are right about her."

"What do you mean?" asked Bertha.

"Oh, something!" Mildred's manner was obviously intended to convey a sense of mystery. "We aren't to tell what we mean just yet."

"You had better get to work and not waste any more time on Mildred and her absurd ideas," said Juliet, as she left the room. "I'll hurry down to see Miss Brown. It's a little more polite than telephoning the invitation at the last minute this way."

"Juliet has taken one of her violent fancies," observed Mildred, as soon as the front door had closed behind her sister. "You know how she always gets wild about people, and thinks they are perfect, and never will believe anything against them. She is just that way now about Miss Brown. Well, she had better wait and see!"

Bertha and Cyntra exchanged a glance of amusement that was not lost upon Mildred.

"You killing child!" said Bertha. "Aren't you just too delighted with yourself? Aren't you just some pumpkins?"

"You are getting very slangy, Bertha," said

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Mildred, primly. "I'm afraid before you know it that our dear and proper Nickie will feel obliged to call you down."

This of course sent the two older girls into shouts of laughter in which Mildred promptly joined and which lasted so long and was so loud that Jim and Nickie came in to see what it was all about, and then, not finding out, insisted upon staying to help set the table.

"Who is your twelfth?" asked Jim. "Cyntra was in deep distress at lunch time because her table was going to be uneven, and here you are putting six on each side! Have you picked up some stray charmer?"

"Yes, we have found somebody—at least we hope we have," said Cyntra. "And you boys must be very nice to her, for she is a total stranger."

"I will, if Bertha will allow me," said Nickie Rufford. "Who is she, and how does she happen to be a stranger?"

"Oh, I suppose it is the Clydes' governess," said Jim. "Juliet has her on her mind, and I see very plainly that the whole duty of the Waring family from now on will be to make that

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girl happy. It's hard sledding to have married into a family who spell Duty to your Neighbor with capital letters!"

"It is a family trait which I didn't inherit," observed Nickie.

"My dear fellow, I should call that remark entirely superfluous," said Jim.

"Quite so," agreed Bertha. "You don't have to inform us of that self-evident fact, my dear!" She admired intensely her tall, good-looking young husband, who was always so proper and dignified that she enjoyed shocking him occasionally. "But I having come into the same family that Jimmy speaks of—I haven't yet decided whether fortunately or unfortunately—I have got to try to live up to them, so I, too, intend to be very nice to Miss Brown. Don't drop the plates in your agitation, Nickie dear!"

"Jim, what am I in for?" sighed Nickie. "When Bertha takes it into her head that something is her duty, she goes the pace!"

Frederica Brown had spent the afternoon in the room which she had taken in the boarding house at the corner of Garland and Lyman Streets. It was a small room on the top floor,

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just as her room in New York had been, but unlike that room in every other particular. The view from the window was of a hillside covered with snow and dotted with little pointed fir trees. There were houses to be seen, but they were not near. The room was simply furnished, and it was so tiny that there was room for only two chairs. Her trunk occupied some space, and there was a small table, on which Frederica had placed one or two books and her work basket, but she was not sewing this Thanksgiving afternoon. She was just sitting by the window looking down upon the fir trees and wondering how she could go through with the ordeal of the long dinner at the boarding house, when there was a knock upon her door. She rose and opened it, and found Juliet Waring standing there.

Juliet was tall, and her coloring was rich and dark. She wore a becoming fur cap drawn down over her hair. Her brown eyes glowed with a pleasant, friendly light, and she was smiling. When her face was in repose it sometimes seemed sad, for she was a girl who thought deeply, and she therefore seemed older than most girls of her age; but when she smiled her whole face changed,

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and she was almost beautiful. To Frederica, as she opened the door, Juliet Waring looked the personification of youth, and kindness, and charm.

"I hope you don't mind my having come right up," she said; "the parlor is so full of people that I thought probably you would rather have me do so."

"Of course!" exclaimed Frederica. "I am so glad to see you! Come in."

"I can't stay a minute, but I'll come in for I have a message for you from my sister, Mrs. Jim Waring, you know. She was very sorry not to come herself, but she is very busy, for we are all going there to dinner to-night. She has sent me down to know if you will come too."

"I? To dinner with your sister? But no! You cannot possibly mean that. I am stupid. I have misunderstood you."

"No, you haven't! It is just what I do mean. And you will be helping us out a lot if you only will come, for we are only eleven without you, and Cyntra wants the table to be even. It is her first big family dinner, and she is quite thrilled over it, and wants it to be a grand success, so do come and help us out! She hopes you won't stand on

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ceremony about her not having called on you first, but you know you haven't been here very long. You have no other engagement, I hope? You are not going anywhere else?"

"Anywhere else! Indeed, no! I have nowhere else to go, and I have been dreading the dinner here more than I can tell you. They all stare so, and they ask me so many questions. There is one lady—but no matter about her!"

"Oh, I know! I am sure it is Miss Baxter. She is always asking questions. She is a great friend of Miss Snow, who lives next door to us. But you needn't mind Miss Baxter. She hasn't anything else to do but find things out and talk about them, but she doesn't mean any harm. Then you will come? How perfectly fine! Cyntra will be so glad. Dinner will be at seven o'clock—and just wear anything that happens to be convenient. I am going to wear a light waist, not an evening dress at all. My cousin's wife will be in full dress, and so will Cyntra's mother-in-law, probably, but the rest of us won't be arrayed at all, so you must keep us in countenance."

It was like Juliet to think of this. She felt sure that Miss Brown's wardrobe would not provide

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anything more elaborate than "a light waist," and the sudden intuition made her announce what she would wear herself. She hurried away as quickly as she had come, after telling Miss Brown how to find her sister's house, and Frederica, after going down to the door with her, seated herself again at the window.

And now the whole aspect of things was changed. She no longer felt lonely and depressed; she need not dread the boarding house dinner and the probing questions of Miss Baxter. She was to dine with friends! Surely they intended to be her friends, or they never would have taken the trouble to ask her to come among them as that dear Juliet had done. She pulled down the shade to shut out the growing darkness and lighted the gas. She must look at her clothes. It was all very well for Miss Waring to suggest the blouse, but evidently that cousin, Mrs. Nicholas Rufford, Junior (she was perfectly familiar with her name, as she had been with Mrs. Anthony Clyde's), was a very grand lady, and the mother-in-law, Mrs. Waring, was rich beyond description. She must do what she could to prove herself equal to such an occasion. She smiled to herself as she

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wondered what Rudolph would say if he knew that she was to dine at the same table with George L. Waring, the great banker. She had reason to suspect that he was a person of especial importance to Rudolph.

Mrs. George L. Waring, Junior, usually spoken of either as "Cyntra," or "Mrs. Jimmie Waring," had been married but a short time. She was the eldest daughter of George Waring, the author. Her mother, who was his first wife, was an Englishwoman who died soon after Cyntra was born. She therefore had been brought up by her English grandmother. When Cyntra was about sixteen, she and her grandmother went to Brussels to live, and there, in an English *pension*, Lady Escott had died. Cyntra was sent to her father in New York, and her traveling companions on the voyage were Mr. and Mrs. West and their daughter Bertha, a girl of her own age whom she had first met in Brussels.

Bertha West, now Mrs. Nickie Rufford, was a lively young person in those days, but she was good-hearted, and quick to adapt herself, and her intimacy with the Warings and Ruffords had been of great benefit to her. Her husband's

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family were all fond of her, although among themselves they were wont to smile or to exchange amused glances over "Bertha's exaggerations." They did not let Nickie see this, however, for he, although so dignified, conservative, and extremely particular, adored Bertha and was entirely satisfied with all that she did. They were so unlike that they suited each other perfectly. Nickie's family felt, therefore, that he could not have chosen a better wife, and they loved Bertha accordingly.

They were all assembled in Cyntra's living-room when Miss Brown arrived. It was a charming room, although it was not large, for Cyntra and Jim had preferred to take a small house when they married rather than the large one that his father had wished to give them. The lights were soft and shaded, the rugs were rich and deep in color, and it was furnished and decorated with their wedding gifts. There were bowls of flowers on the tables, and a wood fire burned on the hearth. The family were all talking and laughing when Frederica came in, and there was so much fun and merriment that it seemed to her like a very large number of people. She paused

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for a moment on the threshold of the room, overcome with shyness, but Juliet was behind her, and Cyntra came forward and welcomed her warmly, while Mr. and Mrs. Waring also rose and went forward to greet her.

To her they seemed a confusing crowd of people; they, on their part, saw a tall, slight, hesitating figure in an extraordinary dress of brightest green. Her dark auburn hair, which grew in a peak on her forehead, was bound around her head in heavy braids, and over her left ear she had placed a white artificial rose. She had meditated long about that rose. It had gone in and out of her hair as she stood before her mirror and studied its effect, while the minutes flew away and she was in imminent risk of being late. She had finally left it in, for she remembered that she was to dine at the table with Mrs. Nicholas Rufford, Junior, who would no doubt wear a rose in her hair.

CHAPTER VI

THE THANKSGIVING DINNER

WHEN they were at last seated at table and Frederica Brown ventured to raise her eyes, she found that she had been placed directly opposite to Mrs. Nicholas Rufford, who wore no flower, and whose costly white gown was absolutely plain in its simplicity. Bertha's rather hard blue eyes were fixed upon her, and it seemed to her that she had met those eyes before, but where she could not remember. She turned from them to those of Juliet with a sense of relief. Bertha was sitting between Juliet and Jim Waring, while Frederica was between Nickie Rufford and Mr. George Waring, the author. Cyntra had her father and her father-in-law on either side of her.

"You will never be able to get us all straight, Miss Brown," she said, laughing as she spoke. "There are no less than four George Warings at this table to-night. It makes endless confusion

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for all concerned, of course. My father gets my father-in-law's letters, and he gets father's, and I met my husband for the first time because he was telephoned to instead of my father, and he was such a scamp that he proceeded to play a trick on me—poor little me, just over from the old country, and dreadfully green, of course!”

“I'm not sorry now as things have turned out that he did it, Cyntra,” said her father-in-law, “although he got the scolding that he deserved at the time. It certainly has turned out fairly well, my dear! But speaking of our mail getting mixed up, Waring, I hope you won't get the bomb that I am sure is being prepared for me!”

The other Mr. Waring looked up with keen interest. Then he laughed. “The Germans won't go for a novelist these days if they can catch a banker. They are after bigger game than they would find in me! But what do you mean?”

“Oh, they are after me, I am pretty sure. You know our firm has made a big loan to the Allies, and done one or two other little things that may have incurred his Satanic Majesty's—I beg pardon! I meant Teutonic Majesty's—displeasure, and I have reason to believe there is some-

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thing in the wind. We have been a good deal bothered lately with a man coming into the bank and insisting upon seeing me personally. Of course they haven't let him into my private office, but he's been quite a nuisance."

"German?"

"Oh, yes, unmistakably. One of those tall, gray-skinned fellows, regular Prussian, with a nose not unlike the Kaiser's own, and a mustache that tries to be like his. They said, though, that the last time he came the mustache had vanished. It must have been something of a sacrifice, but all for the good of the Fatherland, of course. We are going to put the Secret Service on to him if he comes again. Our private detective has been watching him, but he hasn't been there for a week or two, and I imagine he thought it a bit safer to clear out. He probably is just a crank. We have a good many all the time, but it is better to be on the safe side these days!"

Frederica Brown felt a curious sensation in her face; a chill seemed to pass over it as she listened to Mr. Waring. She looked up suddenly and found Mrs. Rufford's eyes fixed upon her. She tried to say something to Mr. Rufford, but

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strangely enough her voice would not come. She took up her glass of water, but her hand trembled and she put it down again untasted. Summoning all her will power, she looked across at Mrs. Rufford once more, wondering if her agitation had been noticed.

"I am afraid you think I am staring terribly," said Bertha, in her high, clear voice, "but I am sure I have met you somewhere before, Miss Brown, and I think I remember now where it was. Were you ever in Brussels?"

Again Frederica felt the curious choking sensation in her throat, and again the chill seemed to pass over her face. It was a moment or two before she could reply. Then she said, calmly: "In Brussels? No, I have never been in Brussels."

"Haven't you? Why, I was sure that I had seen you there several years ago in an English *pension*. That is where I first met Cyntra—Mrs. Jim Waring—when we were only about fifteen. I thought you came there for a few days. Poor old Brussels! Cyntra, do you remember Mrs. Cole, with her short gray hair, who kept the house, and all those funny people? Do you suppose the house is full of German soldiers now?"

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They have been amusing themselves smashing up all the bric-a-brac, I suppose, and slashing at all those oil paintings that were painted right on to the walls of the *salle-à-manger*."

The conversation then became general, and as Frederica's neighbors at table on either side of her were pleasant and friendly, she soon recovered her self-possession. Her only fear was that Mrs. Rufford had noticed her agitation. It was certainly unfortunate that she should have been placed directly opposite to her, but she hoped that she had made her understand how mistaken she had been in supposing that they had ever met before.

The evening passed away pleasantly enough, and at last it came to an end. The guests departed, and finally only the Ruffords were left. Cyntra went upstairs with Bertha to get her coat.

"It seemed to go off quite well, don't you think so?" inquired the young hostess. "I am glad I asked Miss Brown. She seemed to enjoy it, I thought, and she was so nice when she thanked me for inviting her. She seems like a very nice girl."

"And you don't remember her?" asked Bertha.

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"Remember her? Where have I ever seen her?"

"Don't you remember that German family who came to the Brussels *pension* when we were there? Didn't you hear me ask her if she was there?"

"No, I must have come in on the end of your conversation, when you were speaking about Germans being in the house now. I didn't know you thought you had met her before. A German family, did you say, Bertha?"

"Yes, most decidedly German! There were a father and mother and two daughters, and the father was 'more so' than the rest of the family. In fact I think the mother was an Englishwoman, but the eldest daughter—oh, she was the limit! I don't know what their name was, but I remember them perfectly, for the way the youngest girl's hair grew down on her forehead in a peak made a deep impression on my youthful mind. They both had red hair, but the oldest girl was homely. She looked something like a horse—long nose, teeth, everything! Oh, Cyntra, you must remember them!"

"No, I don't! But you know for a long time I didn't take my meals at the *table d'hôte*, and they may have come then. But is Miss Brown really

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one of those girls? You surely can't mean that she is German?"

"She is not telling us so if she is! She said she had never been in Brussels, so I suppose we must believe her, but she certainly got deadly pale at the table to-night, and she shook like a leaf. I couldn't decide whether it was Mr. Waring's conversation about a German spy he was telling Uncle George about, or whether it was my firing Brussels at her."

"But, Bertha, if she says she never was there, I think we ought to believe her, and you know you might easily be mistaken about remembering her. I suppose other girls have red hair that grows in a peak."

"I might be mistaken about her, but never about the sister. There couldn't possibly be two women with that queer, horse-like face. I have never forgotten it, and I should certainly know it again if I ever see it."

"But she says she wasn't there, so that settles it."

"Does it?" said Bertha enigmatically. "Well, we won't say anything yet, but there is one thing

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which to me points very decidedly to her being a German *fräulein*."

"What is that?"

"The white artificial rose in her hair."

They both laughed.

"You may be right," said Cyntra, "but, oh, don't let us give her away! It would be a shame to spoil her chances for a good position, and perhaps she is all right, after all. I really can't believe that she would tell us such a lie."

So they agreed to be silent.

There were not many of the other boarders in the dining room when Miss Brown ate her breakfast the next morning, for she came down early. She had passed an almost sleepless night. Over and over again she had reviewed in her mind the conversation which had taken place at the dinner table. How foolish she had been to deny that she was ever in Brussels! If she had had time to consider the situation she would not have done so, for she was sure that Mrs. Rufford did not believe her; and yet to have acknowledged that she was there would have been to proclaim the fact that she was a German, and thus ruin her pros-

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pects for the present at least. No, it would not have been wise.

That she had told a lie—that it was wrong to tell a lie—did not seem to trouble her. Sometimes one was obliged to hide the exact truth, she had been taught. All small matters must be sacrificed to a great end. She preferred to speak the truth if she could; if she could not, it was no great sin, provided it was not found out. She hoped that in this case it would not be found out.

She was more worried about Mr. Waring's description of the man who had been coming to his bank. She was sure it was Rudolph. If he were told that detectives and Secret Service men were looking for him, would it not keep him away from New York? She lived in dread of his return. She rose early and wrote a letter to Olga which she posted before breakfast.

At luncheon all the ladies assembled promptly. It was something of an ordeal to Frederica to enter the room and take her place at the long table, but she bowed politely to each of the boarders as she sat down.

"Quite foreign, I declare!" whispered Miss Andrews to her neighbor, Miss Baxter. Miss An-

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drews had spent a large part of her life in foreign *pensions*, but had been driven home by the war. She wished it to be remembered. "They always do it over there," she added.

"She is English, I believe," said Miss Baxter. "And she looks it."

"I should have said—well, I scarcely like to suggest it, but—" Miss Andrews still spoke in a whisper, and she had raised her lorgnette—"I should have said if I dared—" and she proceeded to dare—"I should have *said*—German!"

"Oh, never!" exclaimed Miss Baxter, aloud. "Surely you can't think *that*!"

But Miss Andrews only solemnly shook her head with its crimped yellowish gray hair, and again stared at Miss Brown through her lorgnette until the next course came on. Miss Baxter decided to see what a few well-placed questions would bring forth. Her seat was somewhat nearer to Miss Brown than that of her friend, and it was perfectly possible by slightly raising her voice to make herself heard.

"You were out early this morning, Miss Brown," she remarked. "I saw you going to the letter-box while I was dressing. You don't seem to

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get many letters, but perhaps they will be coming along soon. None of your family live here, I understand. Where did you say they are now?"

"In Boston."

"Ah, yes, Boston! Some of my own family live there. Always have, in fact, since Boston was settled. So many foreigners there now, though. It is a great place for them. I am told the Common fairly swarms with them in summer."

To this there was no reply. In a few minutes Miss Baxter began again.

"I didn't see you here at dinner last evening, Miss Brown," she said.

"No," said Frederica.

"Dining out?"

"Yes, Miss Baxter."

"Ah! Well, I preferred to stay at home myself, though of course not for lack of invitations. I always have several, but sometimes one does not feel quite up to going out to a Thanksgiving dinner. Then you must have friends in Clyde Corners?"

"Yes."

"How very nice for you! I understood that you were quite a stranger here."

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To this again there was no answer. Presently Miss Baxter returned to the charge.

"You dined at the Clydes', no doubt?"

"No, Miss Baxter."

"Ah! But now I remember having seen Juliet Waring go upstairs yesterday afternoon. I thought at the time she must be going to Miss Andrews' room, but perhaps it was to yours. Did you dine with the Warings?"

"Yes, Miss Baxter."

"Ah, indeed! Then it must have been at the Jimmie Warings', for I heard that Cyntra was to have all the family. How very nice for you, wasn't it? And have you known them long, may I ask? It was through them that you got your position at Mrs. Anthony Clyde's, I dare say. *Have* you known them long?"

Frederica looked steadily across the table at Miss Baxter. She could bear this torture no longer. Stung by the persistent questioning, she made a mistake. The dislike that she felt could be seen in her eyes, and her voice trembled as she spoke.

"I met them last week for the first time. Is

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there anything else that you would care to know, Miss Baxter?"

Every one at the table heard her and smiled. Miss Baxter saw the smile and became unfriendly.

Elizabeth Clyde looked forward to the coming of the new governess with real dread. No one understood the intense shyness of her nature—not even Juliet, although Juliet was possessed of a certain amount of insight, and although Juliet loved her, and love is so often the key to understanding. She thought that Elizabeth was a girl who did not care to talk much, even with those whom she knew well. She was therefore surprised when Elizabeth suddenly poured forth her true feeling about it, speaking with the utter absence from restraint that is apt to come when reserve is once thrown aside.

"I don't see how I am going to bear it, Juliet! Mamma says that I am to read and study with the new governess! She will be here all day long. Of course Mamma will like her immensely, for she is one of the capable kind, and Mamma likes capable people. I don't see how she endures having me for a daughter, for I am so *incapable*!

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And when I am with a very clever person like Miss Brown I grow stupider and stupider. I always do except with you, Juliet. You are the only clever person I know that I'm not afraid of."

"You poor dear!" exclaimed Juliet, full of sympathy. "But it must be because I am not clever at all, Elizabeth. You think I know a heap more than I do. But don't you like Miss Brown?"

"Indeed I do! That is just it. I like her and I admire her. She has such a calm, assured way of saying things that it makes me all the more afraid of her—afraid that she won't like me."

Juliet considered for a moment. Then she said slowly: "I shouldn't wonder if it were really the other way about, and Miss Brown is a little afraid of you."

"Afraid of me?"

"Yes, of all that you stand for. She is coming more or less into your family life, and she doesn't know any of you at all, and she might very easily be afraid of not pleasing your mother. And besides, she doesn't know you are shy, Elizabeth. She probably thinks that you are—well, rather stiff and stand-offish. I did myself, until I got to know you better. I have no doubt she dreads

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it as much as you do. She said something of the kind to me."

"Did she really?"

"Yes, truly. And if I were you I should remember that, Elizabeth. And just put yourself in her place. How should you feel if you were going somewhere as a governess?"

"How should I feel? Why, I should simply die of fright!"

"Well, then just imagine that she is possibly feeling that way too—and indeed I don't believe that it would be altogether imagination. I think it is probably the truth."

"I hope with all my heart you are right. I am sorry if she is afraid of me, but at the same time it makes me less afraid of her to think she is! I've got to make the best of it, of course, for she is coming and there is no way out of it, but oh, how I dread it!"

But it proved to be much easier than she had feared. Miss Brown assumed her new duties quietly, and with perfect tact. She seemed to know by instinct just what was required of her. She was always ready, but never in the way. Mrs. Clyde was delighted with her. Dorothy and Lucy

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were won at once, and Elizabeth forgot her shyness. The two girls soon became warm friends, for Elizabeth not only admired her intelligence, but she loved her seemingly unselfish nature. Frederica was always ready to do for others, and those others, with the exception of Elizabeth, were not slow to take advantage of it.

But the new governess did not seem to mind. She was happier than she had been for years—perhaps than she had ever been. She was not afraid of work, and the work that she had to do suited her. She passed the entire day at Mrs. Clyde's, only returning to the boarding house to dine and sleep. Above all, she was earning her living and was independent of Rudolph. She was relieved, too, when she found that he was not coming back soon to New York. She had only heard twice from her sister, but she had written as though they were to stay indefinitely in Boston. It was wonderful to be free from Rudolph!

Her face, therefore, lost its lines of sadness, and her eyes grew brighter, and she became a far more attractive-looking girl than she was when she first came to Clyde Corners so short a time ago. There were one or two persons in the

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town who felt some doubt about her, she knew. One of them was Mrs. Nicholas Rufford, but as she seldom saw her it was not of serious importance. The others were some of her fellow-boarders, especially Miss Baxter, but she reasoned that disagreeable, prying people were to be found everywhere, and she must make the best of it, and pay as little attention to them as possible. She had found a real friend in Juliet Waring, she was sure, and she was so glad to have a friend at last!

CHAPTER VII

TWO LETTERS

WHILE life at Clyde Corners went on in this quiet and almost humdrum way, events were crowding thick and fast in the world beyond the little town. On the other side of the water the war raged furiously, and on this side it was thought by many people that we should bear our part in it without further delay. Nickie Rufford and Jim Waring, like many of the young men of Clyde Corners, had spent the preceding summer at Plattsburg and other training camps, and those who were at college had been and were in continuous training. The conviction that their services would soon be needed was in the hearts of all, and the only question was, how soon? A majority of the people were, silently or otherwise, preparing for the great ordeal.

Christmas was close at hand now, and although there was much talk of necessary economy, there

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were not many visible signs of it. The streets and shops were as crowded as usual at that season, and few households were yet ready to cut down their expenses. The Clydes' was no exception to this, and Mrs. Clyde was more busy than ever. She passed the greater part of every day in New York, and she found it exceedingly convenient to leave her affairs at home largely in the hands of Miss Brown. On the Friday before Christmas, which this year fell on Monday, Mrs. Clyde went to New York as usual, taking Dorothy and Lucy with her, and leaving Elizabeth and Miss Brown to wrap up and address a number of her gifts. It was a great convenience, she thought, to have a secretary at Christmas time, and one who was so thorough in all her ways as Miss Brown. She had congratulated herself more than once upon her good luck in getting her. Tony was to arrive from Cambridge that night, but his mother expected to return in time to welcome him.

Elizabeth and Miss Brown had enough to keep them busy until after four o'clock, but by that time every package had been tied up and addressed and the two girls were at liberty to sit down in the library with some of their own work.

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Their needles had scarcely begun to fly, however, when the telephone rang, and the operator proceeded to read to Elizabeth a telegram which had been received for her mother.

Elizabeth listened almost in silence. Then she hung up the telephone and turned to Miss Brown with an expression of such dismay on her face that Frederica was startled.

"Have you heard some bad news?" she asked.
"What is the matter?"

"How perfectly dreadful!" exclaimed Elizabeth.
"What shall I do?"

"What is it, my dear? Do tell me!"

"It was a telegram from Tony."

"And is he not coming? Is he ill?"

"Oh, yes, he is coming! No, he isn't ill. He has come on the ten o'clock train instead of the one o'clock."

"Well, then, what is the trouble?"

"He's bringing Holbrook!" Elizabeth announced it as though it were a calamity.

"Bringing Holbrook? I do not understand. Who is Holbrook? Some one you do not care for?"

"I've never seen him. He's that friend of

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Tony's he is so very intimate with this year. He is always talking and writing about him. Oh, Miss Brown!"

"And is he not desirable? Is that the reason you are so distressed?"

"Desirable?"

"Yes; his social position, perhaps? Or is he too gay? Why do you not like his friendship for your brother?"

"Oh, it's not that! He is anything but gay—if by that you mean fast. He's terribly intellectual. There is nothing he doesn't know. He is so clever that he can even floor some of the professors, Tony says. Tony admires him beyond words—and he seems to be just as fond of Tony, which is funny, for Tony is an old dear but he isn't a bit intellectual, you know. Why, Holbrook has such a wonderful mind that instead of reading a novel when he has time for any light reading he chooses the Book of Job! Did you ever hear of such a thing? He would suit Juliet in that, for she reads the Bible like everything. Oh, if I only were like Juliet! Then I should feel equal to him. I should be better able to cope with him. I am wild to have him meet

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Juliet, but oh, I *can't* meet him myself, and he will be here to-night! He will be here in about two hours!"

She cast herself among the cushions on the sofa. Her dismay was so real that Frederica knew that she meant all that she said, and she looked at her with a feeling of impatience. What an easy life the girl must have had if so small an event as this could cause her to suffer! As she thought of her own life with its many ups and downs—chiefly downs, alas!—she felt that it was not fair.

Presently Elizabeth sat up. The color came into her delicate face and her eyes shone. "I suppose you don't understand at all," she said, "and I know I am very foolish, but I can't *seem* to help it, although I try with all my might. I do so dread meeting strangers, and I have heard so much about Holbrook, and have always been afraid the day would come when Tony would bring him home. I knew it would come sooner or later, and now here it is! And Tony doesn't like it a bit if I am not awfully cordial to his friends. He can't understand my being afraid of them. He thinks I just don't like them, and am stiff and horrid. As if I would be stiff if I could help

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it, and to any one Tony cares for! For I think I love Tony better than anybody in the world, and I would do anything to please him that I possibly could. But you see he is very different from me, for he isn't the least bit shy, and he is so bright and jolly that people don't mind his not being clever in other ways. He is so full of fun, you know, and so happy all the time, and he never thinks of himself, that everybody likes to have him around. Now I am always thinking of myself. I know it is wrong, but I can't seem to help it."

"It does not seem to me that you are," said Frederica slowly. "I do not consider you a selfish person."

"Oh, I don't mean in that way. I really don't know whether I am selfish or not. I never think about that sort of thing, but I am always wondering if people like me, and I am afraid to say anything because I am afraid it will sound silly, and so I go over and over it in my mind until it is too late to say it, or if I do say it without stopping to think, I go over and over it afterward and wish I had said it differently, or hadn't said it at all. Mamma says I am like my father in that. He was a very quiet, shy man. I wish he were liv-



Elizabeth went forward to meet him.

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ing, for I think he would perhaps understand better than Mamma does. But I don't know what I shall do about Holbrook, for I shall be more afraid of speaking to him than I have ever been with anybody. His very name makes me afraid of him. It has such a cold, stately sound."

"What is his full name?"

"Mark Holbrook! Don't you adore it? I have always thought it was just the name for the hero of a novel. And aren't you afraid of it? It just fills me with a sort of awe. But I must go now and see about a room being put in order for him. If they came on the ten o'clock instead of the one o'clock, they will get here ever so much sooner than we thought. The telegram must have been delayed. Perhaps they will get here before Mamma gets home, and that means that I shall have to pour the tea, and receive him, and everything else! Oh, Miss Brown, do please help me out if Mamma doesn't come home by then!"

It was not long before the two boys arrived. Tony's cheerful voice could be heard in the hall as he greeted the maid who opened the door, and Elizabeth went forward to meet him. He immediately introduced Holbrook to her, and it was

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easy to see from his manner that he was eager to have them like each other, but Elizabeth, overcome with shyness, was scarcely able to speak. When she finally raised her eyes, she saw that the friend whom her brother admired so intensely was of medium height, and that his figure was slight and boyish. His eyes and hair were dark, the eyes especially so, and they looked keenly at the world about him through large tortoise shell spectacles. His face when he was not speaking was exceedingly grave, and this effect of intelligent solemnity was heightened by the size of his spectacles, with their round lenses and heavy frame.

Elizabeth managed to introduce the boys to Miss Brown, who bowed to them in a way that was not that of an American girl, as Holbrook, who had lived abroad, at once noticed. In fact, he at once decided that she was German, and he looked at her with some attention. For some reason which he could not explain, unless it was her apparent nationality, he did not like her, and he was glad that she left the room immediately. After she had gone and Elizabeth was obliged to take the responsibility of entertaining the two boys, conversation became easier, for Tony was there

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to help her out, and she soon discovered that Holbrook was not to be feared in the least; on the contrary, she liked him at once, and she soon forgot that she had ever been afraid to make his acquaintance.

It was with a curious mixture of emotions that Frederica Brown went out of the room. She knew that she would not be missed. Of course they would all be civil to her, for she had met with courteous treatment in the Clydes' household from the beginning, but she longed for something more than that. She felt a certain hunger of which she had never before been conscious; perhaps it had not been present until she came to Clyde Corners. The greater part of her life had been passed in moving from place to place, from country to country. Her sister, the only near relative whom she now had, meant little to her. She had not in the least realized what family life could be among kindly, cultivated people until she saw it in the homes of the Clydes and the Warings. The family affection, the "give and take," the community of interests, the mutual admiration which at the same time is so mixed with criticism and fun—it was all a revelation to her.

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And she was entirely outside of it. They were all kind to her, but it was because she was a stranger among them and they were sorry for her; they did not love her. And why should they? She was only the governess, paid for what she could do to make herself useful at so much a month.

She waited for Mrs. Clyde to return, and made a report to her of the afternoon's work. Then she put on her hat and coat and went out into the keen frosty air. By this time it was dark, and the stars were brilliant, but she hurried down the hill without thinking of the wonderful night. She entered the Inn and went up to her own room, forgetting to look for letters as she passed through the hall. They were placed when they came upon a table behind the stairs, and she usually went to see if there were any for her, although she did not receive many. To-night, however, her thoughts were busy, and it did not occur to her to do so until she had reached the top of the third flight up, and then she was too tired to go down again. Probably there were none, and if there were, she could get them when she went down again to dinner.

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She lighted the gas and sat down in the rocking-chair; there was just enough space between it and the bed for her to sit there, for it was a tiny room. She was picturing to herself the scene at the Clydes' which she had so lately left, so different in every respect from this, when there came a sharp knock upon the door. She opened it and found Miss Andrews, whose room was the large fourth floor front. She held two letters in her hand.

"I was coming up, so I brought them," she said; "I knew you had come in, for I was down in the parlor and I saw you didn't stop to get them."

"Oh, thank you!" said Frederica, rather mechanically. She was conscious that Miss Andrews was aware also that the one laid uppermost was addressed to "Miss Frederika Braun," and that the handwriting as well as the spelling presented a marked contrast to that on the other letter, which bore in Juliet Waring's bold, American hand the name, "Miss Frederica Brown."

She thanked Miss Andrews a second time, and slowly but surely closed the door. Miss Andrews went to her own room; that she was carefully considering those letters, Frederica knew from

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her face. It would be necessary to think of some explanation for one of them before she ventured to appear at the dinner table; in the meantime she must read them both. How stupid she had been not to foresee that this might happen! She should have taken greater precautions, she told herself, not to be found out. She did not yet understand, or she did not acknowledge, that to embark upon a course of deceit means always to invite "unfortunate" happenings of this nature.

She examined the foreign-looking letter first. It was addressed to the street in Clyde Corners where she was boarding, so it was from some one who knew where she was living at present, and unmistakably it was written by a German. She had few correspondents, and they were chiefly old school friends who would not be apt to write to her now. They were almost all English girls. The thought suggested something to her, however. Yes, she could explain in this way the German appearance of the address, and the spelling of her name, and she felt a momentary relief. She opened the letter and read it through carefully; it seemed to give her much food for thought. Then she opened Juliet Waring's letter. It was

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only a note, but it contained a suggestion that was as delightful as it was unexpected. This is what she read:

Dear Miss Brown:

We are wondering what you are going to do in the holidays, with your sister so far away. Unless you are going somewhere else, won't you come to us on Sunday and stay until Tuesday? Mother asks me to give you her kindest remembrances and to say that she hopes you will be able to come. We always have great fun Christmas Eve. Probably you haven't had just the same kind of fun, for you haven't any young brothers or sisters. They make it so jolly, and I do hope you will feel like joining us, for we want you very much. My sister and her husband are going to his family, and the Ruffords are to be in New York, so we Warings shall be quite by ourselves unless you take pity on us.

Faithfully yours,

Juliet Waring.

It was such a nice, friendly note! As Frederica sat with it in her hand she felt a glow in her heart. The handwriting was so like Juliet herself—free, generous, friendly. There was nothing cramped or stilted, either in the words or in the manner of saying them. There was nothing to

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make the reader suspect the discussion that had taken place in the Waring household before the note was written.

It had been Juliet's idea, of course, to give the invitation, and Mrs. Waring had agreed to it readily enough, but Mr. Waring had required some persuasion. He was willing to admit that it was not much to do for a lonely and apparently friendless girl, but he maintained that to invite her to become a member of the household, even if only for two nights, should be carefully considered. However, he did not hold out long against the proposal, for he was sorry for any one who seemed so solitary, even though she did not seem to him to ring quite true, and if they could do anything to make her life more like that of the girls around her, he would not be the one to prevent it. Juliet, therefore, had been permitted to write her note.

She had sent it by post, and so it happened that the two letters arrived together, and because of this small coincidence Frederica was forced to make a decision which proved to be of some importance.

Both the style and the substance of the other

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letter were entirely different from the first, although this one was also an invitation. It was written in German, and it began, "My well-beloved Rika!" After the preliminary greetings and flowery expressions of esteem and good-will, the writer reminded her "little friend" of the good old days at home, and expressed confident hope that those same happy days would return to the beloved Fatherland when this cruel war which had been forced upon their peace-loving people by their enemies should be brought to a victorious finish. In the meantime, all the children of the Fatherland, wherever they should find themselves, must unite to bring about this end by whatever means might be in their power. The writer had recently met Rika's sister and her worthy and greatly-to-be-admired husband, and had learned that she was not at present with them, but was occupying the position of governess among people of wealth and prominence in Clyde Corners. Nothing could suit better the purpose of the writer, and of all who truly loved their country—and what true German woman ever ceased to love her country, that great Fatherland which was so soon to govern the whole world? There were

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ways in which dear little Rika could be of the greatest service, and at the same time could add considerably to her income. There would be nothing arduous about the work, nothing to invite suspicion. It would but add to her happiness and her well-being, for she would be at one and the same time serving her country and increasing her means of support.

The writer hoped, and indeed was sure, that she would decide to do this. In order that they might talk it over comfortably, and that they might renew their old friendship, she invited her dear little friend to come on Saturday and stay with her until after Christmas. They would have a real German Christmas together, and Rika would grow to know and love her beloved little sons. There were no less than four sturdy boys whom their mother was endeavoring to train to become true sons of the Fatherland, although they were born in New York.

The letter was signed, "Ida Fischer." She was a woman whom Frederica had known long ago, who was now the wife of a rich German connected with one of the steamship lines which had formerly run between New York and Germany. She was several

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years older than Frederica, who had once felt for her the intense admiration which a little girl sometimes has for one five or six years older than herself. She recalled it now, as she thought of Ida's betrothal and wedding, and how interesting it had seemed then that some one whom she knew so well should leave Germany and go far away to the United States of America to live.

Shortly after this wedding, Frederica had herself gone to England and entered school. She had not seen her old friend since she came to America, and she had not supposed that Ida would even remember her existence. She felt extremely flattered to find that this was not the case. It meant something to be invited to spend Christmas in the home of Mrs. Otto Fischer. She wondered if the Clydes and the Warings had ever met her. They surely would at least have heard of so prominent a person!

And what was this that she said about having something for her to do? Frederica wished that she had been given more definite information, but it would be pleasant to earn some additional money—and perhaps incidentally to serve the Fatherland. She was not however eager to do the

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latter, as she felt at present. She had heard much on that very subject from Rudolph, which inclined her to leave it alone, and since she had been independent of him, she had been reading the New York papers more intelligently. A faint doubt had crossed her mind now and then as to whether the dear Fatherland was always altogether right.

Which of these invitations should she accept? And while she sat with the two letters in her hand, the big bell rang through the house to summon them all to dinner.

As she left her room, Miss Andrews came out of hers and followed her closely down the stairs. "I hope you had nice letters," she remarked pleasantly, but a trifle inquisitively.

"Very," replied Frederica, in the non-committal manner which Miss Andrews and Miss Baxter found irritating.

It pricked Miss Andrews to further effort. After all, if there was a person in their midst who received letters that were distinctly German in appearance, was it not her duty as a good American to look into the matter?

"One of them reminded me of old times abroad,"

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she remarked, pausing for Frederica to overtake her. The staircase was broad enough for them to descend side by side. "I see that your name is sometimes spelled with 'au' instead of in our English and American form."

"I don't spell it that way," said Miss Brown quickly, "and it was done by my friend who wrote the letter just for the sake of an old joke. It was from a girl I went to school with in England, and in school we used to 'foreignize' our name, as we called it, and we would write letters to one another in German, and French, and Italian. I have not heard from her or seen her for a long time, and I was so glad to get her letter. She lives in New York, and she wishes me to come and spend Christmas with her."

"Oh!" exclaimed Miss Andrews, deeply interested; "and are you going?"

"Yes, I think so," said Frederica, deciding rapidly that this was the invitation that she should accept. "She is a very dear friend who has a most charming home, and I know I shall enjoy it."

She told herself later that there was every reason why she should go to Ida, but at the moment

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her chief wish was to prove to these people who so evidently regarded her with suspicion, that she was not utterly friendless as they seemed to suppose, nor dependent upon the kindness and hospitality of the Warings. After dinner she wrote two notes, which she posted that evening, and the next day, which was Saturday, she departed for New York.

CHAPTER VIII

JULIET MEETS MARK

IT was the day after Christmas, and as yet Juliet and Mark Holbrook had not met, although both Tony and Elizabeth had tried to bring them together. There always seemed to be something that unexpectedly interfered with the meeting. On Sunday after the morning service in the little church on the hill, when Elizabeth supposed that Juliet would wait as usual to speak to her, she found when she came out of church that Juliet had not waited but was already half way down the hill. All the young people of Clyde Corners were in the habit of meeting at one of their houses on Sunday afternoons, but on this particular Sunday for some reason it was given up. Tony Clyde and Mark Holbrook went off for a walk, and Juliet told Elizabeth that she was going to church again with her father. The next day, which was Christmas, they were all absorbed in their respective family festivities, so there was

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no chance for Elizabeth to bring together the two persons, Juliet Waring and Mark Holbrook, who were so eminently qualified, she thought, to like each other and to become excellent friends.

The two girls met in one of the shops the morning after Christmas, and Juliet's air of detachment and her apparent lack of interest in Elizabeth's enthusiastic description of Mark Holbrook and all that he had done to enliven Christmas—so nice with the younger children, so charming with Mamma, so delightful a guest in every respect—were a disappointment to Elizabeth.

"You don't seem to be a bit interested," she said.

"Why, yes, I am! But I must get these things, Elizabeth. Of course he is very nice, and I am glad you are so relieved about him. And of course I want to meet your brother's friend because he is your brother's friend—and yours too now, I suppose."

"I only hope you are not getting up one of your prejudices, Juliet!" said Elizabeth, rather severely.

"Against your brother's friend? How could

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I, when all I have ever heard about him has been nice?"

"It might be just for that very reason—just because we are so enthusiastic about him. You are so funny and decided sometimes, and I can see that you are sort of critical about him. You might possibly think him a little—well, not exactly conceited, for he is not that at all—but he knows so much more than most fellows of his age, and of course he knows that he knows it."

"Why should he? If he knows anything at all, he would realize how little it is and how much he has got still to learn, and he should be thoroughly mortified about it, instead of proud! If he is at all like what you say now I am sure I shall not like him, but of course I want very much to meet him before he goes back. There is plenty of time yet."

Juliet's manner was unmistakably frigid. "Have you seen Miss Brown lately?" asked Elizabeth, in order to change the subject.

"Yes, I only saw her for a few minutes before she went to town Saturday."

"She was a little queer in her manner to me, before she went, and she wasn't a bit interested in

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anything I told her. It seemed as if she were perfectly absorbed in the visit she was going to make to her old friend. She was so surprised that I had never heard of the lady, and as if it were a great honor for her to be asked there. She said something about her having many friends after all. I never supposed she hadn't, for most people have friends somewhere! I like her ever so much, Juliet, but don't you really think there is something a little mysterious about her?"

"Not at all!" protested Juliet stoutly. "I think she is perfectly wonderful, and I admire her immensely, and am so sorry for her in that horrid boarding house that I can scarcely bear having her there. I don't see how she stands it, for they are all criticizing and watching her. Miss Andrews came to mother with some story of her having received a letter that looked German. Why shouldn't she, I should like to know? Frederica told me about it. It was from the friend she is staying with, and it seems they were at school together, in England, I suppose, and have always been in the habit of writing to each other in German. I understood that the friend is English. Her name, she said, is Fisher. She said that as

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there is this feeling about German that she would ask her after this not to do it, but the whole thing seems to me absurd. Indeed, I am growing to admire and like her more and more."

"So do I," agreed Elizabeth, "and all you say is very true. And now, Juliet dear, will you do something to oblige me this afternoon?"

"Depends upon what it is, my dear!"

"We are going to walk up to the old Farrington place on the Palisades. We want Mark to see the view from there. Will you go with us, and then come back to dinner, and go with us to the 'movies'? Tony wants to give me a party, and I am to ask my friends, and as many as I like. But I don't want too many, so I thought just you and Bobby Cornish, and one other girl. That will make three girls and three fellows. I haven't quite decided yet who the other girl shall be, but I know very well I want you and so does Tony, of course. Please say you will come!"

Juliet hesitated for an instant. The two girls were still standing by the counter where Juliet had made her purchases, and she turned to receive her change before replying.

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"Don't you want to come?" asked Elizabeth. What could be the matter with Juliet?

"Yes, of course I do!" said Juliet cordially. "It will be very jolly, and I want to meet your brother's friend very much, Elizabeth. Thank you ever so much. I should love to."

"Then why are you so funny about it?"

"I didn't know I was funny. Do you mean because I didn't answer right away? I was thinking about the other girl you said you were going to ask. I wish—but I suppose it would be thought—I don't know how your mother would feel about it—but it would be a good chance to make it all right if you could—I mean with Frederica. I am afraid her feelings are a little hurt, and I know how much you really like her, and how sorry you are for her, just as I am. And now this story of her being a German is sort of spreading over the town, and it seems as if we ought to do what we can to put a stop to it. If she were seen in your party at the 'movies,' and I could casually mention to Miss Andrews when I see her that we had all dined with you first, it would be such a splendid way of getting everything all straightened out."

"So it would!" exclaimed Elizabeth. "It is

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just like you, Juliet, to think of it. I will speak to Mamma, but she has taken such a fancy to Miss Brown that I am sure she will approve. As for Tony, he said she seemed to be all right, and nice-looking—rather pretty, he said, and as for Mark—well, I must confess that I don't think he liked what he saw of her. But Mark won't have to talk to her, if he doesn't want to. By the way, you seem to have reached calling her by her first name! I wonder if I dare!"

"Of course you dare. How absurd! I didn't ask permission, I just said I was going to do it, and she seemed so pleased, and really touched. I think it would be nice to do it, and she is only a girl, just a little older than we are ourselves. But you seem to have made the same progress with the famous Mr. Holbrook! How did you ever dare with him?"

"Oh, we began right off, for he and Tony are so intimate, and he settled right down as one of the family in the nicest sort of way. It was as easy as possible, for after the first few minutes I did not feel shy at all. We all call him by his first name, even Dorothy and Lucy. He asked us to do it. I am so crazy for you to meet him,

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Juliet! I am sure you will admire each other tremendously."

"Don't be too sure! I am not so immensely popular as all that. Then you will ask Frederica, Elizabeth?"

"Yes, I will leave a note there. She is to get back some time to-day, and I will tell her to telephone her answer. If she says she can't come, I can get somebody else at the last minute."

Elizabeth went home and spoke to her mother of the plan, and she mentioned also the fact that Miss Andrews was apparently spreading the impression that their governess was closely in touch with Germans. This was enough for Mrs. Clyde; she not only gave her consent to the invitation, but she said that she would write it herself, and the result was an exceedingly cordial note which Elizabeth presently took to the boarding house. As she went up the steps, the front door opened and Miss Andrews and Miss Baxter came out together. They all met on the piazza, and Elizabeth was warmly greeted by both the ladies.

"Ah," said Miss Baxter, "you are bringing a note for Miss Brown, I suppose! She is away."

"I know she is," said Elizabeth shyly, "but I

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think she is to get back to-day. I hope so, for we want her to come to dinner to-night."

"To dinner?" exclaimed the ladies together, and each held out a hand to take the note. Elizabeth gave it to one of them—she did not know which—and hurried away. Miss Andrews and Miss Baxter exchanged a glance that was full of meaning; then they looked at the address. "It is from Mrs. Clyde herself!" murmured Miss Andrews.

"It certainly is," replied Miss Baxter. "I know her handwriting very well." And she bore the note into the house and laid it in a conspicuous position on the table in the hall.

It was a wonderful afternoon for a walk. The sky was blue and cloudless, except for a slight thickening in the west which suggested that snow might soon come again. At present the ground had but a slight covering. The air was keen and penetrating, but it was not bitterly cold. The plan was for them to join Juliet as she came up the hill, and promptly at the hour named, the Clydes and Mark Holbrook left the house. When they reached the road they saw Juliet approaching, and they walked a little way down to meet her. She was looking her best, Elizabeth thought, for

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the exercise in the cold air had made her cheeks a vivid scarlet, and the beauty of her dark eyes was intensified by her fur cap and collar. She was smiling too, which always made her face more attractive. Elizabeth felt proud of her. She knew that Tony liked her, and she hoped that Mark would also.

Juliet spoke to Tony in her usual cordial way when they all met, for they had long been friends. She had seen him, of course, since he arrived. It seemed to the anxious little friend that her manner was somewhat distant when she greeted Mark. However, Elizabeth could not be sure, and it might be only her own imagination. In a moment the four had paired off naturally, Tony walking with Juliet, and Mark with Elizabeth, and they set out at a brisk pace.

"Oh, dear," thought Elizabeth, "of course Mark would much rather walk with Juliet, but I can't do anything about it, I suppose. I wonder what he would like to talk about? What can I say that would be interesting? If only I were as clever as Juliet! She and Tony are talking away! Tony always does with her, more than with any other girl. I am sure he likes her better

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than any one else. And here I know Mark quite well, and yet I am perfectly dumb! I suppose books would be the best thing, but what book shall I mention first? I am sure I don't know! I shall have to try that alphabetical plan. I saw about it in a book once. If you don't know what to talk about, you commence with a subject that begins with A."

She turned to her companion who was striding along at her side in a silence that evidently did not trouble him in the least, for he made no effort to break it. She was trying to decide what would make the most interesting topic with which to entertain him—acrobats, aeroplanes, or the Argentine—when to her surprise and relief, he opened the conversation himself. Apparently the previous silence had been unnoticed, for he spoke naturally, and in his nicest, most friendly way.

"I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed being here for Christmas," he said. "It was awfully good of you to take me in and treat me just like one of your own family."

"We think it has been nice to have you," said Elizabeth, forgetting her panic, and finding it, as usual, to be perfectly easy to talk to him once

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the subject was found. "Of course you have lots of places to go to, but there are not many of Tony's friends whom I—we—should get to know as quickly as we have you. I feel as if I had known you for years and years."

"I'm mighty glad to hear that! But there aren't as many places as you think where I could have spent Christmas. You see, I haven't any family to be with, for I only have one sister, and she is married and lives out in California, so I can't go to her for Christmas, of course. My uncle in Boston is my guardian, you know, and that is supposed to be my home, but he doesn't—well, he just lives there in a great big house where he has always lived, and he likes everything to go on exactly as it has gone on all his life. Same old servants, same old things to eat, everything going so like clockwork that it drives you almost crazy. He comes home at the same time every day to the minute, after just so much time spent at his office, and just so much time at his club. It drives me mad!"

"It must be awful!" said Elizabeth sympathetically.

"It is; and the worst of it is, I am horribly

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afraid I may get to be just like him unless I'm careful."

"Oh, you never could!"

"Yes, I could! I know it. I see symptoms of it in me, even now. I simply hate to be late, for instance. I am the most horribly on-time person you ever knew. And I can't bear to have my books and papers disturbed, and yet I detest dust. When I am twenty-one I'm going to cut loose somehow. Uncle will be glad to get rid of me, that I'm sure of, and I'll get a good shaking up."

"Where will you go?"

"To the war, of course. I should go over anyhow if it is still going on, whether we are in it or not, and it certainly won't be over by next year. We shall probably be in it by then. We ought to be, and then we fellows will all be going. I would go over and do something without waiting for the country if it were not for leaving college before I graduate, and—oh, because it's war! I hate the very thought of it. It is so horrible to go into training to learn how to kill your fellow-beings, when all civilization has been working and studying for all these years to learn how to keep them alive—especially the Germans themselves! That


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is what I can't in the least understand. I don't believe now that they cared in the least about that part of it. It was just their love of scientific investigation."

"Tony told me that you are going to study to be a doctor."

"Yes, I want to be, but I may have to go over and fight instead."

At that moment they came up to the others who were waiting for them where the path led off into the woods, and the conversation became general, for there began at once an animated discussion as to the best and shortest way of reaching the Farrington house.



CHAPTER IX

THE WALK

JULIET, although she had visited the Farrington place but once, and that soon after she first came to Clyde Corners to live, maintained that the road by which she had then approached it was the better way. Tony, who knew every inch of the country and especially of the Palisades, was equally positive that they would get to their destination more directly if they followed the path they had now reached, and his opinion, supported by Elizabeth, carried the day, and they were soon walking in single file through the underbrush and along this rough path.

"How nice it was of Mark to tell me all about himself," thought Elizabeth. "It is such a lovely and wonderful thing to have people trust you and tell you their troubles and their hopes! He must have a very sad life, with no one but that disagreeable old uncle!"

Mark had not said that his uncle was either

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old or disagreeable, but Elizabeth had gathered this impression of him. She trudged on happily, thinking of Mark having confided his troubles to her and without for an instant remembering that he had not encouraged her to talk to him of herself and her affairs. His own were all-absorbing to him, and the fact that Elizabeth was sincerely interested in them made him like her all the better, and decide that she was a much more charming person than her friend, Miss Waring. She, he said to himself, appeared to be very self-opinionated. It was absurd for her to hold out so firmly in the matter of the shortest way to the Farrington house, for instance. Why should not Tony know the way, when he had lived all his life at Clyde Corners? Miss Waring was undoubtedly handsome, but she was "very much stuck on herself"! He greatly preferred that nice, quiet, intelligent, and modest little Elizabeth Clyde! He had long suspected that Tony was especially interested in Juliet Waring. What strange fancies fellows had!

They left the narrow path and entered upon a cart road which presently brought them to a great open space. Here, well back from the edge

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of the cliff which sloped precipitously to the Hudson River far below, was the old Farrington house. It had been empty for several years, and was sadly in need of paint and repairs, but it had been a fine old mansion in its day. The view from the piazzas, which were high above the ground, was wonderful. The shimmering Hudson lay far below, and on the other side of the river, shining in the afternoon light, were the buildings of the upper part of New York, the great city which stretched far away to the right as far as the eye could reach.

As they stood, for the moment silent, looking at the view, there suddenly broke upon the stillness the sound of half-suppressed laughter. It seemed to come from under the piazza and lasted but an instant. Then all was as still as before. They leaned over the balustrade and looked down. They could see only a small bit of the brick pavement of the space underneath. There was another laugh, unmistakably a giggle, and then a prolonged "Sh!"

Tony vaulted over the railing and dropped to the ground. He quickly disappeared, while the others hung over the balustrade in breathless sus-

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pense. Mark was just about to follow him, when there was a peal of childish laughter in which Tony joined in his usual hearty manner, and in a moment he reappeared, dragging his sister Dorothy with one hand and Lucy with the other, while Mildred Waring, with her arm in that of another girl, followed closely behind them.

"Children!" exclaimed Elizabeth. "What are you doing here?"

"Mildred!" cried Juliet. "Is this where you were coming? What in the world are you doing way up here?"

"We were just having a perfectly grand time when we heard you coming," said Dorothy, "and so we had to hide. Of course we didn't know it was going to be you until we heard your voices quite near. We knew it before you got here though—at least Alice did. Blind people can hear things very far away, and she said she knew it was Juliet coming. We tried not to let you know we were down here, but it was so side-splitting we couldn't keep from laughing the least little teeny bit, and of course you discovered us."

"Yes, we nearly died trying to keep still," said Mildred. "We have never had anybody catch us

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here before. It's been wonderful luck not to."

"Do you mean you come up here often?"

"Of course we do! We play the Spy Game here. It's a grand place for anything of that kind. We always call it the 'Spy House.' It is perfectly fine inside."

"You have been inside?" asked Juliet. She was plainly astonished and somewhat shocked.

"Certainly," replied her young sister calmly. "We can get inside the basement, but we can't get upstairs. I only wish we could. If you would all just come down from your lofty perch up there we'll take you in and show you—lofty perch meaning only that piazza rail, of course!"

They could not help laughing as they looked down upon Mildred's mischievous face. Juliet thought it wiser to refrain from any attempt to reprove her further, especially as she was curious to see what these irrepressible children had discovered. They all went down the piazza steps and entered the 'basement' of the empty house by way of a bulkhead, that some one in closing the house had carelessly overlooked. The children when playing their game there one day in the autumn, had made the thrilling discovery that

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they could get into the house by this means. It was only necessary to descend a few stone steps. They then found themselves in a basement with a cement floor. It seemed to serve as an approach to the main cellar of the house, separated from it by a thick partition in which was a door, bolted on the inside. There was another door, probably leading to the stairs, which was also securely locked. The place was perfectly clean and bare, as if it had been used only for an entrance. It was bitterly cold there, of course, and the girls shivered as they went in, but they examined every nook and corner of it. The floor above was supported by large square posts made of cement, broad enough to hide completely any one who stood behind one of them.

"It is perfectly fine here in warm weather," said Mildred, as she darted about and pointed out these excellent hiding-places. "We usually catch our spy here, and we have our trials and prosecutions here too, except in this winter weather. We have them out in the sun when it is as cold as it is to-day."

"I am glad to hear it," said Juliet, "for it is

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icy here now. Let's go right out now, for it is certainly dangerous to stay in this cellar."

They were about to follow her suggestion when they heard a most unexpected sound without, and those who were in advance paused instantly and motioned to the others to be still. In the silence it was easy to distinguish the approach of an automobile.

"Somebody coming!" said Tony in a whisper. "Keep perfectly quiet! Don't stir! We don't want to be found here if we can help it!"

They all drew back and hid themselves behind the cement supports. The automobile drew up just in front of the open bulkhead, but as this was far under the piazza, it would probably escape the notice of the persons who were arriving. Mark Holbrook, from where he was stationed, could see them getting out, but no one else could do so. There were two women and a man, and they left the car and walked around the house to the other side. The man was examining a bunch of keys, and they were talking earnestly in low tones.

As soon as they were out of sight and hearing, Mark stepped out from his hiding-place. "We

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had better get away while we can," he said.

"Yes," said Tony, "for we certainly don't want to be found here. Those people are probably thinking of taking the house. We can slip out now before they get where they could see us, and get right into the woods from this side. Then if they should happen to see us there it would be all right, for of course there is no reason why we shouldn't be walking around there. Come on, all of you, and be very quiet!"

They ventured forth, thrilled with the sense of a real adventure. They climbed the stone steps, Mildred carefully leading Alice Cornish by the hand, and the boys then closed the cover of the bulkhead. They walked the length of the brick pavement beneath the piazza, and then moved quickly across the ground that lay between the house and the woods. It was probable that they had not been seen, for the door by which the newcomers would enter was on exactly the opposite side of the house. Tony took note of the car as he passed it; it was a dark gray, and there was a monogram on the door. He was interested in the shape and the make of the big limousine, as he was in all such matters, and he recognized

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it at once as being one of the best and the most expensive that were made.

"They must be pretty well off," he said, when they were safely in the woods. "I wonder if they are going to make over the old place into a show place. It would be quite an idea. Wonder who they are!"

They walked on farther to see the view from another point, and after a time they regained the main road and followed it down toward the town. As they stood for a moment at the Clydes' gate before they parted, an automobile going rather slowly passed them on its way down Garland Street.

"There they are!" exclaimed Tony, staring undisguisedly. "That's it!"

"What? Who?" demanded the others.

"I don't know who, but that's their ten thousand dollar car, all right."

"But how can you tell in this half light?" asked Juliet, somewhat doubtfully. "Not that it makes much difference," she added, with a little laugh at herself for trying to argue the point.

"Oh, Tony always recognizes a car," said Elizabeth.

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"Yes, that was the same one," said Holbrook.

"The grandest of its kind," added Tony. "They must be billionaires. If they move out here, they'll set the pace."

The Clydes and Juliet went into the house, but Mark offered to walk down with Mildred and Alice Cornish, who were going home. This pleased Mildred, for it gave her a grown-up feeling that was delightful, and as she and Alice walked down the hill escorted by this Harvard undergraduate, she conversed with him in what she considered her best style. It would have amused Mark immensely if he had not been thinking of something else.

At the corner of Garland and Lyman Streets a large motor car was drawn up in front of a house, and it stood directly under the electric street light.

"Who lives in this house?" asked Holbrook.

"Lots of people," replied Mildred, "for it is a boarding house. That is where Miss Brown boards."

"Indeed!" said Mark. "She has gone away, hasn't she?"

"Only over Christmas."

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"She has come back, I think," said Alice Cornish. "I heard her voice this afternoon."

"Why, Alice! Where did you hear it?"

"Up at the Farrington house, when we were all hiding. She must have been in the automobile. I am sure it was her voice, but I couldn't hear what she said."

"How awfully funny! Let's ask her if she was there."

"You can't do that without explaining that we were there ourselves," said Holbrook, "and we agreed to keep quiet about that."

"Oh, so we did! I forgot that," said Mildred regretfully. "I'm sorry, for it would have been such fun to surprise her by telling her we were under the house. But isn't Alice the most wonderful person about hearing people's voices and recognizing them?"

"It is only because I am blind," said Alice simply. "As I have no eyes, I have to use my ears more. There is nothing wonderful about it."

Mark Holbrook turned and smiled at her. He thought she was a more attractive child than Mildred, who seemed to be inclined "to put on airs," he said to himself. He had decided that

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he did not care much for either of the Warings.

"Are you sure it was Miss Brown?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, perfectly sure."

"Ah!" said he, and then was silent until they reached the two houses on Lyman Street where the girls lived. He bade them good-by, and stood with his hat off as he did so, precisely as though they were quite grown up, which charmed Mildred still further. Then he walked away, instantly forgetting them.

"They were all talking German," he said to himself. "I think the Clydes had better watch out. It was the same car and the same man, waiting in front of the boarding house. I wish I could find him still there when I go by again, and get a good look at him." But when he reached Garland Street, he found that the car had gone.

He entered the Clydes' door just as Elizabeth was returning from the telephone in the hall.

"I have just heard from Miss Brown," she announced. "She got home from New York only a little while ago, but she is coming up to dinner with us, and go to the 'movies.' I am so glad, for I want you and Tony to meet her. That is why we asked her. She is perfectly dear, and I am

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sure you will both like her. You couldn't help it, I know. Bobby Cornish is coming too."

"The little blind girl's brother, I suppose. She is quite a wonder, isn't she?" said Holbrook.

Elizabeth noticed that he made no direct reply to what she had said about Miss Brown, and she sighed slightly as they went into the library. Evidently he was determined to find nothing to admire in the governess. She only hoped that it was not from any snobbishness on his part, but if it was so, she was sure that it was the only flaw in his character. In regard to Miss Brown she would not worry, for she knew that her brother and Bobby Cornish could be depended upon, and Juliet also would do her best to make the evening a success.

As Frederica Brown walked up the hill to the Clydes' house she had much to occupy her thoughts. Her visit to her friend Mrs. Fischer had been both interesting and disturbing, but she must try to put it all behind her until the evening should be over and she was again alone in her little room. She hoped that Mr. Holbrook would not be placed next to her at dinner, but as he was the guest of distinction and she merely the gover-

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ness, it did not seem at all probable that this would be the arrangement of the table. She had met him only on the night of his arrival, and she was sure then that he disliked her. When she returned from New York and found Mrs. Clyde's note of invitation, she almost decided to decline it, for she dreaded meeting again that keen-eyed young man from Boston, who seemed to look through his tortoise shell spectacles into one's very brain. But she was pleased at having been asked, and it would be a relief not to be obliged to go down to dinner with Miss Andrews and Miss Baxter, whose probing questions would surely be troublesome. She had decided, therefore, to accept, and after telephoning her reply, and making the few changes in her dress that were necessary, she left the house. Mrs. Clyde had told her that the girls would wear their street suits.

Her visit at the Fischers' had proved to be unexpectedly interesting, and she felt a thrill of enthusiasm at the mere recollection. She had found that she, Frederica Brown, hitherto unknown and practically friendless, had suddenly become of some value to other people. They had asked her to come there because they needed her

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—not merely because they were sorry for her! It was Rudolph himself who had suggested to them that she might be of use in the Great Cause—and after all, it was a Great Cause. She saw it now, after three days in a German household, with clearer eyes. She had been blinded, she told herself, by her dislike of her brother-in-law. Once away from his presence and his disagreeable manner of authority over her, she liked him better than she did when she saw him every day. After all, Olga was her only sister, and Rudolph was Olga's husband. It was her duty, she thought, and it was certainly more comfortable, to work with him rather than against him—and she was to be well paid for it, too, which was of no small consequence in her summing up of the question.

So it was not surprising, that with all this in her mind, and with the final decision still to be made, that she was unable to think or talk calmly that evening, and the suppressed excitement in her face as well as in her manner was not lost upon Mark Holbrook.

CHAPTER X

AT THE MOVIES

ELIZABETH soon found that she had been entirely mistaken in regard to Holbrook.

Not only was his manner to Miss Brown punctiliously courteous, but he seemed actually to like her far better than she had supposed. And that was not all; it was evident, astounding though it was, that he found her more interesting and attractive than Juliet. He barely spoke to Juliet through the entire evening, but he laughed and talked with Frederica in the most friendly way. He had been placed next to her at dinner after all, and as Elizabeth watched them from her seat on the other side of the table, she wondered what they could be discussing that was so interesting to them both, and as usual she wished that she herself were not so shy, and were capable of talking with such intelligence that a person of Mark Holbrook's ability would turn to her with the deference and the attention that he

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was giving to Frederica Brown. There was certainly nothing of the snob in his manner now! She was ashamed of herself for having even for an instant believed it could be possible. What were they talking about with such animation? She must not try to listen, especially as Bobby Cornish, just home from Annapolis, had much to tell her of his experiences there, but she would greatly like to know.

But their subject was not in the least profound, nor did it require much wit or intellect, she would have thought could she have heard them discussing it. Mark was merely asking his neighbor about her visit in New York.

"You spent Christmas in town, I understand," said he, "and you motored out this afternoon, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did—but how did you know? Ah, then you saw us as we passed? I was not sure. The friends whom I was visiting in New York very kindly brought me home in their car."

"It is very nice to escape the trains, and this was a fine day for it. Not too cold, and the roads in pretty good condition. How were they when you got up on the Palisades? You had

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come that way, I suppose, as you came down from that direction. How do you get up there from New York?"

She glanced at him almost furtively; then she quickly dropped her eyes. "That would be a rather indirect route," she replied. "The road from here to New York is perfectly straight, and you cross the river by one of the ferries a good distance farther down. Of course one can come up over the Palisades from a ferry at the foot of a road not far from here, but—but—it would be unusual to come that way at this season. My friends wished to see something of this place, so we drove around a bit before they left me at the house."

Mark was silent for a moment, and devoted himself to his dinner. "She isn't going to tell that she was up there—if she really was," he thought. "I wonder if that little blind girl could have been mistaken? No, I don't believe she was. I think she was there, for the same car was waiting at her door that we saw on the Palisades. That proves it, of course. She's hiding it for some reason. Perhaps her friends don't want it known that they are thinking of taking the house. That

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of course might very easily be for very good reasons—but it seems more than that. She was certainly embarrassed, and she has something on her mind that is more than the taking of a house by some of her friends could possibly be. Hang it, I wish I could stay here a bit longer! I should like to see this thing through. I'll do what I can to-night, for it is interesting. If they hadn't been talking German, I wouldn't think so much of it all, but they were, and I believe those people were Germans. In fact, I'm dead sure they were."

The affair gained in interest for him as the evening progressed.

"They say the show at the 'movies' is pretty good this week," said Tony, as they rose from the table. "It ought to be, for it is on a mighty good subject—something we had all better look out for just now."

"And what is that?" asked Frederica, turning to Bobby Cornish.

"German spies, I suppose," said he; "the shows are mostly on that now, and they'd better be. There are lots of 'em about. We're mighty careful these days down at Annapolis, I can tell you.

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Caught one not long ago who was getting a bit too busy with her camera."

"A woman?" asked Frederica, rather breathlessly, but Bobby did not notice it.

"It sure was! And a German—very German! Spotted that right off. Knew her instanter for something decidedly off color."

"And what was done with her?"

"Oh, nothing! She made up a fine story about getting some photographs of every place she was stopping at on a pleasure trip she was taking—a regular yarn, of course. They just walked her off and let her go, for they couldn't prove anything—and then, she was a woman. That counts for so much here. I bet they wouldn't be so careful of the lady's feelings if it happened in Germany. They'd stand her up in front of a firing squad in no time, if she'd been caught over there. We're too easy over here."

"But you—er—we are not at war with Germany. Because she was German would hardly be a reason for being especially severe with her, would it?"

"We're not at war yet with Germany," put in Holbrook, who had heard this conversation, "but

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we ought to be, and a good many of us hope we shall be soon."

He had noticed the intense interest shown by Miss Brown in Bobby Cornish's account, and also the slight change in her voice. He wondered if it were his duty to mention his suspicions to Mrs. Clyde, or at any rate to Tony, who would undoubtedly tell his mother, but he decided after some reflection that the time to do this had not yet come. He knew fairly well how matters stood in the household, and that Mrs. Clyde was so entirely satisfied with her governess that she would be extremely annoyed if he, a mere boy visiting in the house, the classmate of her son, should presume to interfere with any of her affairs. And after all, what grounds had he for doing so? His suspicions were built upon the slightest foundations; they were scarcely strong enough to bear his own questioning. The clever Mrs. Anthony Clyde would brush them away at the first touch.

He decided therefore to say nothing even to Tony until they were back in Cambridge—and he might not do so even then. There was only one person in Clyde Corners to whom it might be

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possible to mention the subject, and that was Juliet Waring. He did not wish to do this, for he did not particularly like the girl, and he was very sure that she disliked him, but she was intimate in the family, and therefore it might be wise to consult her as to the course it would be best to take. He still had a few days in which to think this over, and in the meantime he would "watch out." If anything more came to his notice to confirm him in the belief that Miss Brown was a German but was hiding her nationality, he would most certainly consult some one, even if it had to be Juliet Waring.

The play which they saw was what might be called "a thriller." The chief character was a woman of German descent who was the wife of a United States Navy officer, and the action took place partly on land and partly in rapidly moving boats belonging to one of the navy yards. The lady listened at keyholes, stole papers, escaped in disguise, and fired a revolver, with the ease known only to the heroine of a moving picture show, but in spite of the absurdity of the situations one could not help being interested, for the thing was well done, and the lesson to be shown

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was quite worth while, and was fully appreciated by the audience.

Mark Holbrook, sitting behind Frederica and slightly to the right, found her as interesting to watch as the sheet. Her face he could see only in profile, and as the hall was dark, her expression could not be seen, but her head moved nervously at times, and her hand was seldom still. By leaning forward the slightest bit he could see her right hand. She had taken off her gloves, and her fingers closed over them with a tense grasp as she held them. Then the fingers relaxed, only to close again. He noticed that when the heroine was in danger of discovery, which happened frequently, Miss Brown held her gloves with a grip which betrayed her suspense, or her misgiving.

Why did she care so much, he asked himself. He glanced at the other girls, and he could see that they were thinking chiefly of the lighter and more laughable side of it all. They were interested, but they were still more amused, while to Miss Brown the story itself seemed to be of vital importance. He decided that he must confide his doubts to some one. As it could not be Elizabeth or Tony, he feared that after all it would

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have to be Miss Waring. He would tell her if he got the chance, and then she could do with the information as she saw fit—tell her father or her mother, or any older person. It would be a distinct relief to place the responsibility on her shoulders, and think no more about it himself. Of course when he got back to Harvard he would be too busy to think of Clyde Corners at all, and for that reason, if no other, it was his duty to tell some one who lived here.

When they left the hall to go home they found that a fine snow was falling. It deepened in the night to a storm which lasted until noon the next day. Then the sun came out and the world again became a radiant place. It had turned into a cold storm, however, and when it was over a chill wind blew from the northwest. Juliet had spent the morning at home, and after luncheon she went again to her desk. A letter had come that day from her cousin, Philip Rufford, who was driving an ambulance in France, where he had been for more than a year. He and Juliet had always been chums, and he wrote to her with as much regularity as possible. His letters were usually decorated with little sketches of the scenes around

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him, for Phil was an artist of some merit, and he had a sense of humor which found expression in his work. Some of his cartoons had been published, and although he was young he had already become known.

The letter was in reply to one from Juliet, and she was not altogether pleased with what he said. She had written to him as she always did, telling him of all the little things that were happening every day at home, and in the one to which he referred she had described the coming of Frederica Brown to Clyde Corners, and her presence at Cyntia's Thanksgiving dinner. More as a joke than anything else, she had mentioned the suspicions that were entertained by several persons that the stranger was a German, but which were of course quite preposterous, she had said.

Much to her indignation, Phil did not seem to consider them in the least foolish.

"You had better watch out," he wrote. "They are everywhere over here, and they were in England for years before the war. A fellow was telling me about one in a little English village. I can't go into details, or my letter wouldn't be allowed to go through, but the woman—it was a

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young woman there, too—was a spy, proved beyond a doubt. Don't trust 'em, my child! Put not your confidence in Teutons, nor in any child of the Hun! Excuse my seeming irreverence to the Psalms. I don't mean it that way.

“Somehow one would think twice before indulging in any irreverence over here. You think of things differently. It is queer how phrases in the Psalter come back to me like that. We talk some about those things here—more than I ever thought of doing at home. You know how we have always thought you knew such a heap about the Bible? Well, can you believe me, I've grown to like reading it! Never supposed I should, but it seems to fill the bill always. It's wonderful when you get very far down, and you wonder if the world is ever going to get straightened out again, and then you read about the things that happened several thousand years ago, and the awful mess that David got into, and all those other old worthies, and then they would sit down and write a Psalm or two, and sing them, I suppose, and now we have those very Psalms to help us through *this* awful mess, and they are just as good and just as true now as they were then. And then

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the things in the New Testament, which mean so much more than the Psalms do, of course. I suppose if ever there was a time when the Cause seemed to be lost and everything over, it was when those men and women watched the Crucifixion, and yet look at the way the Cause lived! It seems positively cowardly for us to get disheartened now—but oh, Juliet, I wish you would hurry up over there and come into the war! It's a sin not to. These fellows can't keep up forever. We've *got* to help them!

"Time's up, and I must go. Hurry call just come. But look out for that gov——"

The letter ended here, without even a signature.

Juliet was busy answering it. She expressed at great length her faith in Frederica Brown, and her distress that he should have thought for an instant that there were any real grounds for supposing her to be German—and just when she had reached that point she heard the door bell ringing. She glanced from the window and saw drawn up in front of the house a singular turnout: the Clydes' gray donkey, harnessed to a large bobsled. Seated on the sled were Elizabeth and Mark Holbrook, and Tony was evidently ringing the door-

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bell, for the others were watching him from where they sat. Juliet ran down to open the door herself.

"You're the one we're after," said Tony, looking like a good-natured giant in his leather jacket, his fur cap in his hand, and his face a bright scarlet from the cold. "We're taking a sleighride and we've room for one more. Don't you want to come? We may all roll off if Simon takes it into his head to kick, but the snow is pretty deep so I don't believe it will hurt us much."

"Oh, I'd love to go!" cried Juliet. "Come in and get warm while I get ready."

"No, thank you, I'll wait outside, for if Simon takes it into his head to go, he just goes! Mark would never be able to hold him." Simple Simon was the name of the donkey. "Better put on lots of things—everything you own, if I were you," he called out as he ran down the path. "It's cold as blazes."

She did not keep them waiting long. No one was in the house but her father, who was writing in his study, so she ran across to the little wool shop on the other side of the road to tell her mother that she was going, and then came back to be packed on

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to the sled. There was just room for the four, one behind the other. They sat with their knees hunched up and their hands clutching the rail at either side. It was perilous, but it was fun, and Simple Simon started off at a demure pace which probably was safe enough but which did not promise to carry them a great distance from home.

"We'll keep on the level if we can," said Tony over his shoulder. Juliet sat behind him, and Elizabeth back of her, while Mark guarded the extreme end of the sled. "I shouldn't dare climb any hills, or we'd lose Mark, sure! We'll keep to the valley. Suppose we follow the river, and we'll go north first, so as to look forward to warmer weather coming home."

There was a road on the other side of the Clyde River, reached by that which had always been known as Clyde's Lane. It led across a stone bridge, which had replaced the wooden structure of long ago.

"Your name pursues you, doesn't it?" said Holbrook, as they passed a sign-board.

"Yes, it seems to. Our family lived down here once," replied Tony. "You know the portrait of old Tony in our library? Well, he fed his pigs

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and his chickens and hoed his corn right over there. Pretty busy old chap, he was. So much the better for us that he was, I guess!"

"That portrait doesn't show him feeding any pigs! He looks rather a fine old gentleman there."

"Oh, that was after the war! We came up in the world a peg or two after the Revolution. Perhaps we'll drop again after this war, and somebody else will climb up. This road isn't bad, is it?"

"Fine!" they all agreed.

Simon's gait being a slow trot, the motion did not increase the wind to any perceptible degree, and as the sleighing was excellent, they kept on, going farther than they had had any thought of doing, Tony in fact forgetting altogether to turn toward home.

"What have you been doing all day?" he asked Juliet, over his shoulder.

"I've been writing."

"A story?"

"Oh, no; a letter."

"All day writing a letter? Must have been a long one!"

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"It was, rather. I had a letter from Phil that had to be answered at once. He is so foolish!"

"Oh! you mean your cousin who is in France—Phil Rufford?"

"Yes. I *wish* people wouldn't be so silly! Let's talk about something else."

But Tony was silent after this. He knew that Juliet cared a great deal for this cousin; he was wondering in just what way he had been "silly," and he forgot to turn toward home.

CHAPTER XI

"JUST MISS BROWN!"

IT was Elizabeth who finally reminded her brother that they must have come a good distance, and that it might be as well to take the next road that would bring them around to Clyde Corners, unless he intended to go back as they had come; and a few rods farther on they came to a cross-road.

Simon realized at once that this meant going home for he was not as simple as his name would imply. With a dash of his heels and a flourish of his tail, he whisked around the corner, heedless of the danger of an abrupt turning in heavy snow, and for once Tony was not ready for his sudden spurt of animation. In an instant Simon had upset the sled, and the four passengers were sprawling in the drift at the side of the road.

There were cries of surprise and laughter: Tony shouted "Whoa!" at the top of his voice, and fortunately hung on to the reins so that Si-

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mon, much as he would have enjoyed doing so, did not get away. His master scrambled to his feet and succeeded in bringing him to a halt. Mark and Juliet were also up in an instant, and Mark righted the sled. They were all laughing, and for a moment or two no one noticed that Elizabeth did not rise. Then Juliet turned and saw that she was lying perfectly still, and that her face was white.

"Elizabeth, are you hurt?" she exclaimed.

"It's my knee!" murmured Elizabeth, in a faint voice. "It was agony for a minute, but it is a little better now—just a little. I'll try to get up." But she could not, and indeed she almost fainted when she tried to rise.

"You mustn't try to do it," said Mark, in a tone of authority. "I'm the nearest to being a doctor in this crowd, and I positively forbid you to get up. I don't believe you could, anyhow. Tony, let's see if we can lift her on to the sled and fix her comfortably. She'll have to lie down, so Miss Waring and I will have to walk, and you take her home, only you've got to be mighty careful with that beast of yours. Do you suppose you can hold him in?" He went to where Tony was stand-

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ing at Simon's head. "It might be pretty serious if Elizabeth were to be thrown off again, but I don't see any other way of getting her away from here, do you?"

"No, I don't," replied Tony, his face and voice full of concern. "And it was all my fault, too, for not being ready for this provoking old donkey! There are no houses very near, so we can't telephone for anybody to come for her. We haven't passed a house for a couple of miles at least."

"You could start, anyway, and perhaps if she isn't comfortable you could stop at the first house you come to, and telephone for a taxi, or something, couldn't you? I don't see what else there is to do, for she can't lie here in the snow until you get something here. What do you think, Miss Waring?"

"Of course it is the only thing to be done," replied Juliet promptly. She was sitting in the drift, supporting Elizabeth, and watching her pale face with some anxiety. "You and I will walk back as far as it is necessary—until we find some way of getting home. I think we can make her comfortable, with most of the sled to herself. How far from home do you think we are, Tony?"

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"Oh, not more than five miles, I think. But I hate to have you walk, Juliet. Couldn't we fix it so that you could ride too?"

"Oh, no indeed! There isn't room, and I can easily do it. And now that is settled, suppose you come to Elizabeth, and I will look after Simon while you two boys get the poor dear on to the sled. I mean Elizabeth—not Simon!"

She held the donkey with a firm hand, and her touch as she stroked Simon's nose seemed to quiet the lively little beast, for he stood perfectly still while Tony and Mark lifted Elizabeth carefully and placed her on the sled. Her knee had gone back into place and the pain was passing off. She was not able to sit upright, however, and the only way in which she was comfortable was to be in a half-reclining position, with the injured knee raised. Juliet took off her long coat and Tony his heavy sweater, and these they bound to the sled with Juliet's knit scarf, thus making a cushion for her back. Elizabeth was able to hold herself on, and as she was accustomed to the donkey's vagaries there would be no danger of her rolling off, she was sure.

In a few minutes they were ready to start. The

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plan was to restrain Simon to a walk, which would be safer for Elizabeth, and would enable Juliet and Mark to keep close behind. For a time they followed this arrangement, but they soon found that Elizabeth could keep in position perfectly well even when Simon was allowed to trot, and it therefore seemed better to get her home as soon as possible. Mark urged this strongly, and the others agreed that he was right. Tony had no intention of taking any risks, and he held the donkey with a strong hand, slowing into a walk when a corner must be turned. Elizabeth was not in the least afraid, in spite of her rather uncertain position, and so it was decided that the party should divide, and those who were walking should be left behind. If Juliet found the walk too long and hard, they could stop at the first house that had a telephone and send for a car or a sleigh to come for them.

For a time the two trudged in silence along the snowy road. All around them lay a vast expanse of dazzling white, broken here and there by a group of trees. A line of willows marked the course of the Clyde River, now at some distance from the road. High up on the left was a wood.

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There were no houses, no living beings in sight.

"We might be in Alaska, or Siberia!" said Holbrook. "Who would suppose we were only a few miles from a town, with New York only a little way beyond? It is queer to see no houses anywhere. I rather like it."

"It is wonderful!" exclaimed Juliet, standing still for a moment to look. "But there is a house, very far off! Don't you see the smoke coming out of the chimney, over there? The house is light colored, so it doesn't show much against the snow."

She had been wondering what to talk about, and she now seized eagerly on the opening that he had made. The accident had in a measure broken down the wall which each of them had helped to erect between them, and she said to herself now that she liked Mark Holbrook better than she had thought she ever could.

"He really has a lot of common sense," she thought; "I didn't suppose he would have it in him to throw off his little affectations so entirely. He has actually forgotten for a few minutes, that there is so important a person in the world as Mr. Mark Holbrook of Boston and Harvard

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University! I shouldn't wonder if he would make a pretty good doctor—for some people, that is! I shouldn't want him myself for a doctor. Well, he is very hard to talk to, but I suppose we ought to talk about something, and it is my turn to begin. What on earth shall I say now?"

But she was spared the trouble of finding a suitable topic, for while she was considering the matter, the silence was again broken by Holbrook himself, and in so unexpected a manner that Juliet was for a moment, from sheer amazement, unable to reply.

He too had been thinking hard as they walked, and when at a bend of the road far ahead the sled with its burden passed out of sight, he decided to speak to her on the subject which for the past twenty-four hours had caused him real anxiety. It seemed as though the accident had made it not only possible, but desirable, that he should consult Juliet Waring. He was leaving Clyde Corners the following day, and it was not probable that between now and then he would be with any one in whom it would be better to confide. He would have preferred to go to some man and ask his advice, but he knew no one to whom he

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could tell his rather vague suspicions. He liked Miss Waring this afternoon much better than he had until now. She really had quite a lot of common sense, he said to himself, thus using the same phrase which Juliet had applied to him. He would have been immensely amused had he been able to read her thoughts. He saw that she was one who could be trusted, for he felt her sincerity, and he liked it. Although up to now he had not liked her, he admired what she was. He knew that she was a truthful person, and therefore one on whom he could depend. She was not in the least affected or conceited, as so many girls were, he thought. He thus exonerated her completely from the two faults which Juliet at the same moment was thinking of in connection with himself!

This again would have amused him could he have known it, for Mark's sense of humor was so strong that he could laugh even at himself. It was indeed a "saving grace" in his case, for it would in time outweigh his faults and restore his balance. At present, although he often laughed at himself, he allowed no one else to know that he did.

"I want to speak to you about something, Miss

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Waring," he began, in a hesitating way that was unlike his usual confident manner. "Do you—er—that is—er—do you feel quite sure of that Miss Brown?"

It was so startling that Juliet stopped short in the road and looked at him. That she was angry, he perceived at once. The color rose in her cheeks, and her eyes showed her resentment. He did not know it, but there were two reasons for her to be particularly annoyed: one was the fact that she had spent the early part of the day in writing a perfectly unnecessary defense of Frederica—at least it should have been unnecessary—to her cousin in France, and the other was that this insufferable young man from Boston spoke of one whom she considered her own special friend as "*that* Miss Brown!" She had not realized until to-day that she looked upon Frederica, whom after all she had known only two months, as her especial friend, but now she was sure that she did.

"What do you mean?" she asked hotly. "You must put it into plainer language before I can answer you."

"I mean precisely what I said," he replied.

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Her unmistakable wrath had the instant effect of making him perfectly calm. His manner was unruffled and cool, and Juliet found it intensely aggravating. "Do you feel perfectly sure of Miss Brown? I myself have a very strong suspicion that she may be a German herself, or that she has German associations."

"And what if she is, or has? All Germans are not spies! There are a great many in this country who are perfectly loyal Americans!"

"Very true, and I take off my hat to them, but do they make a secret of it—that they are German, I mean? They are perfectly honest and above-board about it, but so far as I can see, this Miss Brown is hiding it, if she is one, and I am pretty sure that she is, for everything seems to point that way."

"I should like to know what! And first you call her 'that' and then you call her 'this'! Will you be good enough to speak of her as—just Miss Brown?"

"Oh, certainly, with pleasure! This or that makes no difference to me. I should like to consult you about—just Miss Brown!"

Juliet made no reply. She had no intention of

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helping him in any way, and besides, she was extremely angry. She knew that he was laughing at her—and she was afraid she had been rather absurd—but there was another reason for her silence. She was afraid that she might cry. When she was angry it was always difficult for her to speak without crying, and it would be ignominious indeed to do it in the presence of this young man; therefore she remained silent. The danger of tears had saved her from making many a sharp speech, for Juliet had a hot temper which had already caused her many hours of remorse at times.

Holbrook appeared to take no notice of her silence. He had decided to speak his mind on this subject, and no obstinacy on the part of this provoking girl should deter him. He was hesitating only because he was considering how best to present his case.

“Probably you don’t know,” he said at last, “that yesterday when we were all up there on the Palisades, at that house, and that car came up, that the people in it were Germans.”

“No, I didn’t know it, but why shouldn’t they be? New York is full of Germans. Of course

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we all know that, and I suppose they have as much right as any one else has to look at a house that is for sale, haven't they?"

"Certainly they have, but——"

He paused, not knowing exactly how to continue. Then he had what he considered an inspiration. Although he had no sister of his own he had known girls more or less intimately all his life. As a rule, they were possessed of some curiosity, and as a rule they could be trusted to break a silence. Fellows 'did not care how long they kept quiet, but girls always thought it necessary to say something, and especially if they wanted to find out anything. They were usually the first to speak in any case. He would wait! Sooner or later, she would ask a question.

They tramped on, but the only sound was the crunch of the snow beneath their feet. Juliet asked no question.

"I vow I'll let it go!" he said to himself angrily. His own wrath was rising. "No, I won't either! I won't be downed by this ridiculous girl! She's got to talk about it, whether she wants to or not, and she's got to be made to understand what that governess really is." He glanced at her as

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she stalked along in front of him. "She looks like a tragedy queen, head in the air, and all! No easy job, though, to be extra-dignified in a snow drift!"

He found it difficult not to laugh outright when Juliet, trying to increase her speed without relaxing her haughty demeanor, stumbled in the deep snow and almost went down. She recovered herself before he had time to offer any assistance. Still nothing was said, and at last, tired of waiting for her, he spoke again.

"I think you ought to know that Miss Brown herself was one of the party in the automobile up there yesterday."

"Impossible!" said Juliet. "I am afraid some one has been playing a joke on you—stuffing you, as it were! You are too easily taken in, I am afraid, Mr. Holbrook."

"That may be, but your sister knows she was there."

"Mildred? Then why hasn't she told me herself?"

Then she remembered that she had scarcely seen Mildred since yesterday, for when she reached home in the evening, her sister was asleep,

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and this morning Mildred had left the house early, for she was to pass the remainder of her holidays with her aunt, Mrs. Rufford, in New York. In the excitement of packing and departure she had probably forgotten to speak of the events of the day before.

“I cannot answer that,” replied Mark, “but I can say that the little blind girl heard Miss Brown’s voice, which she recognized at once. She was perfectly sure that the young lady was one of the party. In fact, it was she who first spoke of it. I watched Miss Brown rather closely at the show last night, and I think if you had seen her while that spy business was going on, you would agree with me that—well, that she was well worth watching.”

“I should be mortified to think I had done so!” exclaimed Juliet. “It seems to me the most extraordinary thing to do—to watch a person in that way, and then try to persuade her friends that she is an impostor of some sort—a girl who is honestly trying to support herself in a perfectly proper way. It seems to me outrageously mean to cast slurs upon her character, as you and others are doing. The people in the boarding

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house are bad enough, examining her mail, the way they do, and asking her all kinds of impertinent questions, but this is worse, I think. They are a lot of old ladies who have nothing else to do, and they live here in Clyde Corners. It is their town, and if they choose to worry about German spies being here, they have a perfect right to do so, idiotic though it is, but you—well, if you will excuse my saying so—if you will pardon my putting it so plainly—I really think it's—it's—it's none——”

She broke off abruptly. Those hateful tears and that catch in her breath were coming again.

“It is none of my business, I suppose you were about to say,” said Holbrook, calmly finishing the sentence for her. By this time he was exceedingly angry himself, and with himself as much as with her. He had been a fool, he thought, to bring up the subject with such a hot-tempered girl. What did Tony see in her? *What* a temper she had! He had one himself, he was only too well aware, but it showed itself in a different way. He as usual took refuge in sarcasm. “You will pardon me for having spoken to you about it,” he said icily; “I did not realize at all that Miss Brown

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is an old and intimate friend of yours, and that you are quite willing and able to vouch for her. I had completely misunderstood the situation. I thought from what I was told by the Clydes that she came here entirely unknown, and with only a written recommendation from some one in England, but you speak of her as a friend whom you have always been intimate with. I am awfully sorry, and beg ten thousand pardons. I don't wonder you are angry. We are all getting a little on edge, perhaps, and very likely I exaggerate the need for caution. The fact that she was with Germans and was speaking German with them, and that she afterward said nothing about having been up at that house, although we talked about her trip out from New York—all that made me think there was something queer about it."

For a few minutes there was again only the sound of the crunching footsteps. Juliet was engaged in an argument with herself. As usual, the truth-loving side of her gained the victory, dearly as the other side would have liked to allow him to remain apparently in the wrong.

"She is not an old friend of mine," she jerked out. "I never saw her in my life until I met her

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on Garland Street in November, and she asked me the way to the Clydes' house, but I like her, and I believe in her. I have taken her for a friend, and as she is my friend, I shall stand by her. And it seems to me frightfully mean to try to make me or any one believe that she is an impostor of any sort, spy or anything else."

"And it seems to me wrong and lacking in loyalty to one's country, now when we are on the very verge of war, and we know that German spies are everywhere, to let any exaggerated notions of loyalty to people stop us from finding out whether a thing of this kind is so or not. I don't wish to injure the girl. Why should I? But there is something about her that makes me doubt her, and I have no doubt you would find that there are others who feel as I do, besides the ladies in the boarding house."

Juliet had no answer for this, for she remembered her father's opinion, and Bertha Rufford's outspoken suspicion. It was only too true that there were "others," but she had no intention of telling him so, and she decided to put an end to the argument once and forever.

"No one can ever make me believe that Fred-

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erica Brown is not as true and open as the day," she said. "Until she herself tells me that she is a spy, I shall never doubt her. That is the kind of friend that I try to be, Mr. Holbrook."

He looked at her with some admiration, in spite of his anger and his dislike. She was pretty fine after all, he said to himself. Aloud he said: "Miss Brown is fortunate to have such a supporter. You are a friend worth having, Miss Waring."

"Please don't be sarcastic!" she burst out. "I detest and despise sarcasm."

"Sorry to disagree with you again, but this time you are really mistaken. I confess that I do occasionally take refuge in sarcasm, but I never was farther from it in my life than at this minute."

"Then I am afraid that you are always rather near it," she retorted. "And now will you be good enough to talk about something else?"

"Delighted, I'm sure!"

And then for at least ten minutes they tramped on in silence.

CHAPTER XII

SISTER OLGA

AT last, on turning a bend in the road, they saw a house not far away.

“Actually a house in sight!” exclaimed Juliet, in tones of relief that she made no effort to hide. “Perhaps they have a telephone. I should like, if they have, to send for a taxi or a sleigh.”

“Certainly,” said he; “an excellent plan.”

But it was not necessary to telephone, for just as they reached the house they heard the sound of sleigh-bells coming down the road which at this point crossed the one upon which they were walking, and a sleigh appeared. It proved to be one belonging to the provision store in Clyde Corners at which the Warings were in the habit of dealing. Juliet recognized the driver, and at once asked him to allow her to drive back to the town with him. She politely made room for Holbrook to sit beside her, as she took her place next to the young

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man on the only seat which the truck-sleigh afforded, but Mark with equal ceremony declined to get in.

"Thanks awfully, but really I would much rather walk. I shall rather enjoy a tramp in the snow by myself."

And then he caught himself up. "Hang it!" he thought; "I've gone and put my foot in it again!"

Juliet's expressive face showed that she understood. "Oh, certainly!" she said, "naturally you would. It will give your alert mind an opportunity for further thought. Good-by, Mr. Holbrook!"

"Good-by, Miss Waring!" He took off his cap and bowed profoundly. He stood watching her as she drove off with the provision man. "She will probably take cold, for she hasn't any extra wrap to put on after walking, and the wind is so cold."

The instinct of the physician was strong in him. He pulled off his warm leather jacket and ran after the sleigh, shouting to them to stop. They thought he had changed his mind about driving with them, and the man pulled in his horse and

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waited for him to come up. Mark ploughed through the heavy snow at the side of the road and reached Juliet. He threw the coat around her shoulders without a word, buttoning it securely over her own jacket in such a way that she could not at once raise her arms to free herself.

"What are you doing?" she demanded wrathfully. "I don't want this!"

"I know you don't, but you've got to wear it. You don't want pneumonia, do you? That might be worse than wearing my coat. I shan't need it walking—in case you are worried about me. Glad to get rid of it. Drive on, will you?" he added to the man.

The horse, a lively animal, started forward. Mark stood still, his anger forgotten, and laughed aloud as he watched the rapidly moving sleigh. He knew that unless she wished to display her indignation to the provision man, the haughty young woman whom he had fastened up in his coat would be obliged to keep it on. For once, he had succeeded in having the last word with her. Unless she were to act like a child she would wear the jacket home. It warmed him to think

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of it. Chill though the wind was, he needed no coat himself as he tramped along, laughing aloud every now and then until he found himself once more in the town and it was necessary to control his mirth.

Juliet felt no such amusement. She was so angry with him that she would have liked to throw the leather coat into the road for him to find and pick up when he came to it, but no such relief to her feelings was possible. Of course the provision man must not know of her annoyance, and therefore she must keep still. How dared he do such a thing—put the jacket on her, by actual force, when he had no right even to offer it to her! And the worst of it was that she was perfectly sure that Holbrook was enjoying a situation that was making her so miserable! Unless he was cold. He had taken off a sweater to make Elizabeth comfortable, and now he had given up his jacket to do the same for her. After all, it was rather nice of him to insist upon her being warm, although she hated him for placing her under such obligations to him. She could not bear him! He may have saved her from pneumonia, as he

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said—which was nonsense, for she never took cold—but she detested his way of doing it.

Clyde Corners was reached at last, and the sleigh stopped in front of the Warings' door, and she could unbutton the coat and take it off without danger of comment. She thanked the provision man for his kindness, and walked up the path holding the offending garment by the collar, at arm's length from her person. She entered the house and at once went to look for a box, in which she packed the coat, tied it up and addressed it, and then she telephoned for a messenger to deliver the box at once at Mrs. Anthony Clyde's.

The next thing to do was to find out how Elizabeth had borne the trip home. Tony answered the telephone and said that all had gone well. There had been no further mishap, and Elizabeth's knee, although still very painful, appeared to be no worse. The doctor had been sent for, and they hoped to know soon just how much injury had been done.

"And where are you?" he asked. "I was just going to send something to meet you on the chance."

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"I am at home. We met a man in a sleigh from one of the shops, and he brought me home."

"Good enough! And Mark too, I suppose."

"No, he preferred to walk."

"He did! Just like old Markie, that!"

"Very!"

"Isn't he great?" continued the cheerful and admiring Tony.

"Give lots of love to Elizabeth," was the only reply to this question. "I'll be up to-morrow to see her, of course. You go off early, I suppose?"

"Yes—worse luck! It's been lots of fun seeing you. Shall you be at home if I—if Mark and I—come down to-night to say good-by?"

"Sorry," said Juliet, "but I'm going to be out." On the instant she decided that she would dine either with Cyntra or the Ruffords. Fancy being obliged to meet Mark Holbrook again that evening—although very probably he would have refused to come! But she was sorry not to see Tony again. Why had he not suggested in the first place that he would come alone?

Cyntra was to be at home and glad to have her dine there. As it was early when she set forth, she thought she would stop at the boarding house

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on her way to her sister's and make a short call upon Frederica Brown. She felt a great desire to do this, for having been obliged twice that day to defend her so vigorously, she was extremely anxious to see her friend. She glowed with loyalty and indignation, and she wished to give active expression to these emotions. There should be no half way measures in her friendship—indeed, she was ready to go far more than half way to meet Frederica!

The door was opened to her and she entered the hall, being told that Miss Brown was at home. There were several ladies in the parlor as was usual at that hour, and Juliet decided to run upstairs to Frederica's room without being announced. She had often done so before, and with an intimate friend one should show herself above formality. Perfect informality was an excellent rule, she thought, and she must remember to tell Frederica to do the same thing when she came to the Warings'. She went upstairs so briskly, and with such an air of independence, that she did not hear the maid murmur that Miss Brown already had a visitor, neither had she noticed a waiting automobile at the door. It was only when she

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knocked upon Frederica's door that it occurred to her that, almost without being conscious of it, she had heard a steady flow of conversation from behind that door as she came upstairs—conversation of a curious kind, with a certain inflection of tone that was unusual. It was not loud, and she heard no words. It ceased altogether when she knocked, and for a moment there was perfect stillness. Then some one moved toward the door and opened it a little way. In the space thus formed stood Miss Brown.

"Who iss this-s?" she asked, and still her voice held the same inflection, and the S's were slightly hissed. "Oh, Juliet!"

Was it Juliet's imagination, or was she right in thinking that her friend's tone was rather less cordial than usual? It was her imagination, of course!

"Yes, it is I," she said aloud. "How are you? Oh, have you company? I am sorry I didn't know it. I came right up, as there were so many people in the parlor I thought you would like to see me up here. I have been wanting so much to hear about your visit in New York. You know I have scarcely seen you since you got back. But per-

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on her way to her sister's and make a short call upon Frederica Brown. She felt a great desire to do this, for having been obliged twice that day to defend her so vigorously, she was extremely anxious to see her friend. She glowed with loyalty and indignation, and she wished to give active expression to these emotions. There should be no half way measures in her friendship—indeed, she was ready to go far more than half way to meet Frederica!

The door was opened to her and she entered the hall, being told that Miss Brown was at home. There were several ladies in the parlor as was usual at that hour, and Juliet decided to run upstairs to Frederica's room without being announced. She had often done so before, and with an intimate friend one should show herself above formality. Perfect informality was an excellent rule, she thought, and she must remember to tell Frederica to do the same thing when she came to the Warings'. She went upstairs so briskly, and with such an air of independence, that she did not hear the maid murmur that Miss Brown already had a visitor, neither had she noticed a waiting automobile at the door. It was only when she

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knocked open Frederick's door that it occurred to her that, ~~without~~ without being conscious of it, she had heard a steady flow of conversation from behind that door as she came upstairs—conversation of a serious sort, with a certain inflection of tone that was unusual. It was not loud, and she heard no words. It ceased altogether when she knocked, and for a moment there was perfect stillness. They ~~were~~ ~~one~~ moved toward the door and opened it a little way. In the space thus formed stood Miss Brown.

"What is this?" she asked, and still her voice held the same inflection, and the S's were slightly hurried. "Oh, nothing."

Was it Juliet's imagination, or was she right in thinking that her friend's tone was rather less cordial than usual? It was her imagination, of course!

"Yes, it is L," she said aloud. "How are you? Oh, have you company? I am sorry I didn't know it. I came right up, as there were so many people in the parlor I thought you would like to see me up here. I have been wanting so much to hear about your visit in New York. You know I have scarcely seen you since you got back. But per-

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haps, as you have a caller already, you would rather have me wait until some other time?"

For a moment or two the situation was unmistakably embarrassing. There was no denying the fact, plainly visible now, that Frederica was not especially pleased to see her. She evidently wished no interruption. Juliet was uncertain what course to take; she had just decided to turn and go down again when Frederica recovered herself.

"Come in," she said. "I am pleased to have you meet my sister. Olga, this is my friend, Miss Waring."

"Pleased to meet you!" said the sister.

"Oh, what a nice surprise!" exclaimed Juliet, cordially extending her hand. "I didn't know your sister was anywhere near! You have been living in Boston, haven't you—or have been there this winter?"

"I haf been traveling," said Olga primly. "My husband is engaged in business which makes it necessary for him to travel. I am now in New York for a few days only, visiting at the home of a friend."

"How lovely for Frederica to have you come!"

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said Juliet, but when she glanced at Frederica she saw that it did not seem as though she found the situation in the least "lovely." On the contrary, the pathetic look, the expression which her face had worn when she first came to Clyde Corners, and which had since almost completely vanished, was there again. She looked actually unhappy. Juliet, considering with close attention the sister, felt that perhaps it was natural.

She saw a tall woman with a face shaped like that of a horse, with round, prominent eyes and large teeth. Juliet gazed at her as though she were fascinated. It was strange, she thought, that you liked the face of a horse on the horse, but not on your friend's sister. The lady was taller than Juliet was herself; she was obliged to look up into those large eyes—and it seemed as if they were hostile to her. They stared at her from beneath a large hat burdened with a bunch of ostrich feathers, which nodded and trembled as their wearer moved or spoke. She now gathered up her furs, which were on the bed.

"I must leave you now, Rika," she said, as she enveloped herself in a huge neck-piece of yellow fur. "I shall see you again before I return to—

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to Rudolph. And remember that Rudolph feels that it is of the utmost importance that we should settle that matter immediately. Do not forget this. Let nothing interfere. Miss Waring, I will bid you good evening. I am pleased to have made your acquaintance."

"If you will excuse me," said Frederica, "I will go down to the door with my sister. Please sit down, and I will come back at once."

"Wouldn't you rather have me go?" asked Juliet. "I'm so sorry to have interrupted your call, Mrs.—I beg your pardon, but I don't think I heard your name?"

Neither sister supplied the information, however. The visitor was already half way down the first flight of stairs, and Frederica, with a brief request that Juliet would wait upstairs, hurried after her. Under the circumstances Juliet felt that it would be kinder to remain where she was, rather than again interfere with the sisters' parting words by following them. She therefore seated herself in the little room and waited. It was all very awkward, and she wished that she had not come up without being announced. Frederica had been very nice, as of course she would be, for

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Juliet was trying to forget the first few minutes, but the sister had made no effort to hide her opinion that Juliet's appearance had been untimely—and of course that was only natural, for no doubt she had come all the way out to Clyde Corners to discuss family matters with Frederica. It must have been provoking to be interrupted, and not for the first time in her life did Juliet wish that she had not acted so impulsively.

As she sat beneath the gaslight her eyes rested upon a bit of paper which lay upon the table. She was not conscious of seeing it, much less of reading what was written on it, but she sat apparently looking at it, absorbed in her own regret at having spoiled the sisters' interview.

Presently Frederica returned. She toiled up the stairs as though she were weary, and her face looked pale and drawn. It almost seemed as though she had been frightened by something. She glanced anxiously at Juliet, and coming to the little table she moved a book, thus covering the slip of paper. She watched Juliet sharply as she did this, but Juliet was thinking and speaking of the subject that had filled her mind, and noticed nothing.

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"I am so sorry I came up!" she said. "I really feel awfully about it, Frederica, for I know I hurried your sister. She would probably have stayed with you ever so much longer, wouldn't she?"

"Oh, no!" replied Frederica. "She was going, for she didn't wish to keep the car too long. My friend Mrs. Fischer sent her out in her automobile. Olga is staying there."

"That is where you went for Christmas, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"And what is your sister's name—her last name? If I were to meet her again I couldn't call her 'Mrs. Olga,' which is all I know!" Juliet tried to laugh as she made this pleasantry, but Frederica did not even smile.

"You will not meet her again, for she is leaving to-morrow, but her name is—her name is Drumm."

"Droom?" repeated Juliet. She supposed it to be spelt thus. It was a name she had never heard before. "I think her first name is beautiful—Olga! And I remember that you or she spoke of your brother-in-law as 'Rudolph.' They sound like people in a novel, don't they?"

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"I had never thought of it," said Frederica listlessly. Then suddenly her manner changed, and the color came into her cheeks. "Why do you question me so closely about their names?" she demanded. "What matters it to you or to any one what they may be called?"

Juliet looked at her in astonishment. She was about to make some equally sharp retort when she was again struck by Frederica's face. The poor girl was evidently exhausted, she said to herself. She was no doubt irritable because she was tired. With instant self-control she succeeded in speaking quietly.

"Only because I am interested in your people, Frederica! Of course your sister and your brother-in-law's names are of no real importance to me. It is just because you and I have become such friends that I want to know about them."

"Of course!" said Frederica. Then, as Juliet rose to go, with a sudden movement she stepped forward and threw her arms around her neck. "Forgive me, dear Juliet!" she murmured, her voice vibrating with emotion. And for the first time she kissed her.

A little thrill of repulsion ran through Juliet.

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She hoped that Frederica did not notice it, and she could not imagine why she felt it. She liked and admired Frederica so intensely, and yet at that moment she did not wish to touch her—much less, kiss her! Why did she have this curious feeling? She supposed because by nature she was rather undemonstrative. She rarely kissed her friends. She loved them with intensity, but she could not show her affection as other girls did. Instinctively she drew back.

“Ah, you are offended!” exclaimed Frederica. “You cannot forgive me!”

“I am not a bit offended!” laughed Juliet; “and there is absolutely nothing to forgive, so don’t be a goose! But I must run, for I am going up to my sister’s to dinner, and I shall be late as it is. I shall see you again very soon. Do go to bed early! It is easy to see that you’re dreadfully tired.”

“Yes, I believe I am. I am not going down to dinner. Ah, you need not worry about my having nothing to eat if I do not go down! My sister brought me out some good things from Mrs. Fischer’s—she sent them to me! Ida is always so thoughtful! If you were not going to your

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sister's I should insist upon your staying to have supper with me. Could you not do it, even now?"

"Oh, no, thanks! I couldn't possibly, for they are expecting me. Good-by, my dear! Get rested!"

She ran downstairs, assuring Frederica that she could perfectly well let herself out alone, and Miss Brown turned back and entered her room. In a moment she had closed and locked the door.

She had passed a trying and an exhausting afternoon. Her visit in New York had been exhilarating, for not only had she enjoyed the comfort and the luxury which she found in the home of her old friend, but she had gained there the conviction that she had important work to do in the world—work of far more consequence than that of a governess or a secretary, but which would be carried out more successfully because she occupied both of those positions. It had been a pleasure, too, to be again in the society of Ida Fischer, and to listen to her once more. In the old days Ida had been the object of the younger girl's intense admiration, and time had made no change in this. To hear Ida talk of the glorious Fatherland, and of the allegiance which

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Frederica owed to it, the immense benefit which she could bring to it by serving it—all this was inspiring, to say the least. This sense of her own importance to the great Cause was flattering. Even she, the unknown Frederica Brown, could be of use, merely by following the advice and the suggestions of Ida and her agreeable husband.

She liked Mr. Fischer. His manner toward her was altogether different from that of her domineering brother-in-law. He did not give her his orders in the brutal manner of Rudolph. He had merely suggested in the most polite and courteous language that certain things might be done by her, if she were willing.

“Judge for yourself,” he had said. “As time goes on, see what you can do to help. We will leave it entirely to you.”

And just when she had been considering this in her room that afternoon, and had about decided to throw herself heart and soul into the Cause, and to do all that they wished, her door had suddenly burst open with no preliminary knock, and Olga—her sister Olga—had walked in! It was impossible for her to greet her with any semblance of cordiality, for Rudolph no doubt was

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behind her—although in thinking this over afterward she realized that this fear was absurd on her part, for if Rudolph had been there, he would have been in front of his wife, not behind her.

Olga had brought more plans and directions, which were written on the bit of paper left lying on the table. It seemed to her that Juliet must have seen them, and, if so, as a matter of course had read them when she was alone in the room, for they were directly under her eyes. If she had—well, in that case Frederica feared that she might be forced to leave Clyde Corners, which would be unfortunate, to say the least. Her best plan now would be to wait and watch carefully, making no attempt to carry out these instructions for a day or so at least. She regretted bitterly that it would be necessary to obey Rudolph's instructions at all, but he was undoubtedly acting from the same high motives which inspired the Fischers. It was only his unfortunate disposition which made her dislike him as a brother-in-law. She would try to conquer this dislike, "for the good of the Cause."

Olga looked so prosperous, she was so unusually well-dressed, that Frederica suspected that

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this new work of Rudolph's was paying him well. Her sister had told her that they had been in Canada, and that furs were so cheap there that she had bought the yellow set for "a mere nothing," but Frederica knew they must have cost far more than Rudolph was in the habit of allowing his wife to spend on such things. Perhaps "the Cause" was making him generous and good-natured! It might be so.

She dried her tears—she had been crying from fatigue and uncertainty and a sense of hopeless depression—and rising from the bed upon which she had thrown herself, she opened the box of sandwiches and cake and fruit which Ida Fischer had so kindly sent her. Having eaten with excellent appetite, she now looked upon her affairs and her prospects with greater cheerfulness. After all, the world was not so dark a place as she, but a short time ago, had been inclined to consider it.

CHAPTER XIII

BERTHA CALLS ON MISS BAXTER

IN the meantime Juliet was dining with Cyntra and Jim, and a little later, when they were sitting in the living-room, Jim with his paper and the two girls with their knitting, the Ruffords came in. Nickie Rufford had some local matters to talk over with Jim, for both young men were interested in the affairs of the town, and they went to the dining-room to spread out their papers on the table and discuss them.

The girls were thus left to themselves, and as usual Bertha had much to say. She was at work upon a large sweater of khaki wool, and her needles moved as rapidly as her tongue while she recounted her afternoon's adventures.

"I went to see Miss Baxter," she announced. "I thought I had better, although I can't bear the old gossip, but just because she is such a gossip I think it's wiser to keep on the right side of her. If I offend her, she will be making up something

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awful. She asked me to-day if it was true that Nickie was going to France to offer his services. I told her I hadn't heard of it yet, and then she said she hoped not, for it would mean but the one thing, and she had hoped and always supposed that we were so happy! Did you ever? I said that he would certainly go if we enter the war, and I should be thoroughly ashamed of him, and very *unhappy* if he didn't. I hoped that my husband was no slacker, and I added, 'I've brought him up better than that, I hope!' And what do you think she said then? She fixed her lorgnette upon me, and with a glassy stare she remarked, 'Brought him up? Why, you haven't known him so very long, have you? I understood that before you were married you moved in a very different set from the Ruffords!' Now did you ever hear anything quite equal to that for a slap? If it hadn't been so funny, I should have been raging, but I just laughed and said, 'Well, Nickie and I are in very much the same set just at present, but if he doesn't do something to break up the Kaiser's set, I'll go to France myself and leave him to look after himself.' She doesn't know now whether I meant it or not, poor old dear!"

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"You had better be careful how you joke with her," said Cyntra. "I don't see exactly why you went there at all, Bertha. It couldn't have been because you were afraid of her, as you tried to make us believe, for you said the very things that may start her off against you."

"Well, I've got to confess that I had what would be called in a book 'an ulterior motive.' I wanted to find out something."

"And did you?"

"Oh, I heard a lot of trash from her. But on my own hook, and quite by myself, I saw something which I consider quite startling."

"Bertha! What was it? We can always trust you to get up an excitement!"

"Quite so! I'm glad I can. Life would be insufferably dull if I couldn't. But I don't know about telling you this now, Cyntra. I would if you and I were alone, but with our precious little Juliet here, I don't know."

"Oh, secrets!" said Juliet, making no attempt to leave them. "I supposed that both of you having reached the high estate of matrimony, you would have outgrown your girlish habit of having secrets. But you can't faze me that way, Bertha!"

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I used to mind very much when you left me out, but I was young then, and exceedingly foolish. Now I am old, and——”

“Exceedingly wise, I suppose! Well, then, I’ll take you at your word, but you probably won’t like what I am going to say.”

“Try me and see!”

“If you don’t like it, you can just remember that you have brought it on yourself. Cyntra is the witness.”

“Oh, hurry up, and unburden your mind!” said Juliet, waving the sock that she was making at her cousin’s wife. “You won’t be happy until you’ve done it, and of course Nickie’s family are anxious to make you happy!”

“Thanks, awfully! Cyntra, do you remember my telling you that night when we all dined here, and Miss Brown was here, that I was sure I had seen her somewhere before? That I was perfectly certain she was at the Brussels *pension* while we were there, and when I asked her, she said she had never been in Brussels? Do you remember?”

“Yes,” said Cyntra, “of course I do.”

“And you know I told you that the sister had

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a face that I had never forgotten, because she looked exactly like a horse?"

"Yes."

"Well, my dear, I met that woman on the stairs this afternoon! As I was coming down the stairs from Miss Baxter's room, she was going up!"

"Bertha, you're dreaming! You couldn't have seen her! Where would she be going?"

"Where indeed? That is the point, but I know that at that moment she was going upstairs in the Clyde Corners Inn, and she went up as far as the top floor, and there she opened and shut a door."

Cyntra said nothing. It was so like Bertha to be positive, and she knew that it was useless to try to convince her that she might be mistaken. It was so absurd for her to imagine that a person whom she had seen years ago in Brussels could possibly be going upstairs in Clyde Corners! She glanced at Juliet, who had not spoken since Bertha began her story. Her face was grave, but Juliet's face was apt to wear this expression when she was not speaking. Cyntra knew that her sister would resent the suggestion that Miss Brown had not spoken the truth.

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"Of course it was only a strong likeness, Bertha," said Cyntra at last; "you can't expect us to believe it was the same person, you ridiculous girl! How could she get here in little old Clyde Corners, and—oh, Bertha!"

"I do expect you to believe it," replied Bertha. "It was the same girl, grown older, and by no means handsomer. She is more like a horse than ever."

Juliet laid down her work, for her hands trembled so violently that she was dropping her stitches. "More like a horse than ever!" The sister whom she had met in Frederica's room that afternoon had closely resembled a horse. Had she not herself thought so? She determined to keep perfectly still. She would not allow herself to say a word.

"And what is more," added Bertha, "I am as sure as if she had told me so that she went to Miss Brown's room. I *know* it was her sister!"

Juliet went home early. She said that she was tired and sleepy after the sleighride and the walk, which she had described to her family. Nickie Rufford said he would take her home in his car, which was waiting at the door, and he would

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then come back for Bertha. When he returned, Jim called to him to come in again for a minute, as Bertha was not quite ready. He found them all in earnest conversation, for Bertha had been telling Jimmie of the meeting on the stairs, and they agreed that "something ought to be done," but what form the "something" should take, they did not know. After all, the United States was not at war with Germany, and natives of that country had as much right to live here, and to go up or down stairs as they wished, as had any one else. Neither was there anything to prove that Miss Brown was a German. She had a name that was both American and English, she spoke English without a trace of foreign accent, and above all, she was Mrs. Clyde's governess. It required some courage in Clyde Corners to meddle in any way with the affairs of Mrs. Anthony Clyde; she preferred to manage them herself, as every one knew. She would brook no interference.

"But the people at the Inn are talking like everything," said Bertha. "No one seems to trust her, and yet they can't just say why. Of course it may be because they have gotten started on it, and they haven't much else to do."

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"That is probably all it amounts to," said Jim Waring. "You know what that place is. She has offended those high and mighty old ladies in some way, and so they are getting back at her by trying to make out that she's a German spy. We ought to be all the more careful 'to go slow' in the matter. It would be a pretty nasty bit of business if we did anything to make her lose her position. She would never get another anywhere if she did, for of course the whole thing would get out, and the story would follow her everywhere. She would be pursued by it for the rest of her days—and there may not be a word of truth in it. And even if she is German, and it was her sister whom Bertha saw, what of that? There are any number of loyal Germans in New York and in the whole country—loyal to us, I mean."

"I shouldn't think anything of her being German," said Nickie. "It's not that, but she is trying to hide it, if she is one, and she didn't speak the truth to Bertha about Brussels, as the woman on the stairs to-day has proved. Bertha is perfectly wonderful about remembering faces. You can't beat her at that. To my mind, it settles the question as to her being German. Whether

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she is a spy or not, I am not yet ready to say."

"I don't for an instant believe she is," said Cyntra, "and I quite agree with Jimmie that we oughtn't to do a thing until we are perfectly sure that she is. It would be a dreadful thing to take away her character, and perhaps all for nothing! She goes to our house—I mean, father's—a good deal, and mother says she is always very pleasant and nice, and father seems to have rather gotten over his first feeling about her, she thinks, for he hasn't said anything about it for a good while. As for Juliet——"

"Oh, Juliet!" interrupted Bertha, with a laugh that was slightly scornful. "Juliet isn't going to listen to a word against her. Did you see how she was actually holding on to herself, so as not to say anything to-night? It was as much as she could do not to take my head off for what I said, and of course that was why she went home early. She was simply furious, and I'm not sorry I made her so. Juliet is perfectly silly about her friends. I think she has the most exaggerated idea of loyalty to them. Do you remember her, Cyntra, in that valentine fuss at your school? How she stood up for Clara Clifford through

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everything, even when Clara was so nasty to her?"

"Yes, I remember," replied Cyntra, "and I know Juliet." Then she added with a smile, "But there is no one quite like her, and I would rather have her too loyal to her friends than not loyal enough."

They finally decided that nothing could be done at present, and they would let the matter drop. Bertha put on her wraps, and she and Nickie said good night. They were just going out the door when Nickie turned back.

"The Farrington place has been taken, I hear," he said to Jim.

"Has it really? Who is taking it?"

"I think the name is Fisher. It was Henderson, the real estate man, who told me. They have bought it, I understand. Henderson is quite set up about it, for it has been on his hands so long."

Then they parted, with no further thought of the Farrington place.

It was true that Juliet had been angry as she listened to Bertha, and it was also true that she had realized that her only safety lay in flight. If she had stayed she would no doubt have said something which later she would have regretted

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sorely. It was not merely what Bertha had said that had tried her patience, but it was because all day long she had been engaged, either in defending Frederica or in quieting her own uncomfortable suspicions. First had come the letter from Phil Rufford, which she had answered; then Mark Holbrook's unwarranted remarks; then the meeting with the sister in Frederica's room—and now finally the unexpected attack on the part of Bertha. Every one seemed to be down on that poor innocent girl! And deep down under Juliet's indignation was the lurking, never-to-be-recognized fear that perhaps the gossip was true!

The sister was certainly peculiar, but what was it that made her so? Nothing—absolutely nothing! It was all purely imaginary. Juliet went to bed and exhausted by the adventures and excitements of the day, she soon fell asleep. She slept heavily for several hours, but soon after three o'clock she awoke with a start. What was the matter, she thought? Why had she this dull sense of anxiety? What had happened? She sat up in bed, her eyes wide open and staring into the darkness.

Suddenly she knew. The little slip of paper she

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had seen upon the table in Frederica's room, which had apparently made no impression on her at the time, and which she most certainly had not thought of since, came now into her mind with a vividness that was startling. She had not been conscious then of seeing it, much less of reading what was written on it, but now in her mind she saw the paper again, and she saw that the words on it were written in German—in German script! They had meant nothing to her, although she had a slight schoolgirl's knowledge of the language. She had not read or translated them; she had only looked at them, and now they came back to her, merely as she had looked at them. She did not know what their meaning was.

And another thing came before her with an insistence that she was unable at this hour to ignore, as she had done before she went to sleep, and also when she was at Cyntra's. The sister, that peculiar-looking sister with the face like that of a horse, just as Bertha had said it was—the sister had spoken with an accent that was undeniably German. She had said "Varing!" She had hissed her s's!

Juliet sank back upon her pillow. What should

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be done? With a clearness of thought that sometimes comes in the night, she considered the situation and decided upon her course of action, and then she fell asleep.

She did not wake again until it was time to get up. A new day was beginning, and no matter what it brought she would be true to her colors. She would stand by Frederica Brown through thick and thin. What if the words on that paper were in German? What if the sister spoke with an accent? There was no cause to doubt Frederica because of either of those facts. She said to herself that friendship would be but a poor thing if it faltered for such reasons as those. In the glow of her enthusiasm she determined not to heed the perfectly reasonable comment once made by her father. "There is no objection to her being a German. She can't help herself in that. But if she is one, and won't acknowledge it—if she is trying to hide it from us—why, in that case, Juliet, I should hardly be willing to have her come to the house. Of course we don't wish to interfere if it can be helped. I should be sorry to spoil her chance to make a living, but—well, be careful, my dear!"

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Because of these doubts which she knew were in her father's mind, she decided not to discuss the matter any further with him or with her mother, which would have amounted to the same thing, she well knew.

"I suppose I shall have my hands full," she said to herself as she dressed. "I shall have to be awfully careful about everything. I shall have to take especial care not to lose my temper, when every one is so aggravating about it, even my beloved Daddy. But I mean to do my best. I am going to stand by that poor girl through thick and thin, and with me to help her, I know she will come out all right. Of course she will, for I know she is innocent, and good, and true!"

Breakfast over, Juliet put on her hat and coat and left the house. It was still vacation, and her mornings were therefore her own. She was going up to see Elizabeth Clyde. Tony and Mark Holbrook would be gone, she knew, for they were to make another visit together before they returned to Cambridge, and their plan was to leave Clyde Corners by an early train. She was sorry not to see Tony again, she thought as she climbed the hill, and she was glad that he was Elizabeth's

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brother, and not Mark Holbrook! It would be awkward to dislike the brother of one of her closest friends so intensely. He had his good points, of course; it was only fair to acknowledge them. She would be just to him, but she found it impossible to be generous to one who had such an absurdly high opinion of himself, and had also been so far from nice about Frederica. She felt that she could never forgive him for that, her poor Frederica! For she had reached the point of thinking of her thus.

It was strange, she thought, that Tony admired Holbrook so intensely, and seemed almost to look up to him. In her opinion Tony was infinitely his superior. It had not occurred to him to suspect, and watch, and judge Frederica as Mark Holbrook had done. Tony Clyde would never do that, she was sure.

CHAPTER XIV

FREDERICA AT THE FERRY

JULIET was told to go up to Elizabeth's sitting-room in the tower, and she ran quickly up the stairs to the second floor, and then along the winding passage-way which led to the tower end of the house. It was not until she reached the half-open door at the end of this hall that she heard the steady sound of a voice. She stopped short in the passage. Was it possible? Had the boys not gone, after all? For it was Holbrook's voice, and he was reading aloud.

Her first impulse was to turn back. In fact she did turn, but only to see Mrs. Clyde coming toward her from the other part of the house. She greeted Juliet warmly.

"I am so glad you have come, my dear! I was just thinking of telephoning you to ask you to come up and spend the day with Elizabeth. The poor child must keep perfectly quiet for some time, the doctor says, for her knee is quite badly

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hurt—more so than we thought at first. It is so unfortunate! Why you all went out with that wretched donkey I can't imagine. It was just like Tony to get up such a mad scheme. Now will you stay with her? I must go to New York for the day, for I am up to my very ears in meetings, one following right after the other, all day long. I would send for Miss Brown, but I really don't like to call upon her when she is entitled to her vacation. I have no right to her time this week, so I shall be much obliged to you, Juliet, if you will stay all day with Elizabeth."

Mrs. Clyde took it for granted that Juliet would do as she requested. She led the way into her daughter's sitting-room, still talking, and there was nothing for Juliet to do but follow her. She must give up all thought of running away.

Elizabeth was on the sofa, propped up by many cushions, and she was knitting. Tony, on the other side of the room near one of the windows, was working on the parts of a gun which he was cleaning and polishing with great thoroughness. Not far from the sofa, in a large easy chair, Mark Holbrook was seated. He gave a slight exclamation as he looked up and saw Juliet behind

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Mrs. Clyde. He closed the book and hastily laid it aside as he rose to his feet. Tony came forward, his face wreathed in smiles, and Elizabeth greeted her with the same evident pleasure. Mark, as Juliet at once noted, was the only person who did not seem glad to see her.

Perhaps this was not to be wondered at, for her expressive face showed her surprise and chagrin very plainly at finding him still there. As she had been thinking most of the way up the hill that she cordially disliked Mark Holbrook, and was glad he had gone, it was difficult for her to control her face immediately. To hide her confusion, she turned to Elizabeth at once, but not before Mark had noted the flash of distaste in her eyes.

"I came to see how you are," she said, "for I thought you would be all alone."

"I am going to be very soon. The boys had to change their plans, for there has been some change in the trains, but they are going in about an hour. I'm so glad you have come, Juliet!"

"Now I can leave you with an easy conscience!" said Mrs. Clyde, gaily. "Not that it would have been in the least uneasy, for I must be at those

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meetings, and of course you could get along perfectly well alone if Juliet were not able to come, but here she is, and here she must stay. We won't take any refusal. Good-by, Tony, my dear! I hope all will go well. Let me hear from you—and don't think any more about this aviation nonsense, will you? Or driving an ambulance, or any of those foolish ideas. I shall never give my consent to it unless we go into the war ourselves, and of course we are not going into it as long as Mr. Wilson is President. That was the slogan that got him elected, you know! Isn't that what you call it—slogan? 'He's kept us out of war!' So don't think about flying, and don't waste too much time cleaning guns, will you, dear? You won't need them!"

She kissed him, and then she turned to Mark Holbrook. "Good-by, Mark! Come again when you can. It has been a great pleasure to have you here, and it gives me such a feeling of security about Tony. You won't let him do anything rash, will you? You are so sensible, I can depend upon you never to encourage his going to France. That I should never allow him to do. It really isn't necessary, you know."

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Mark Holbrook looked straight at her with his keen brown eyes. Juliet, watching him, felt his honesty, and for the moment in spite of her prejudice she liked him, and this unexpected liking was deepened by what she heard him say.

"Don't be too sure of me, Mrs. Clyde, for if we go into the war, and even if as a nation we don't, I shall never do anything to hold Tony back. It wouldn't be fair to let you think I would. I think we ought to be in it now, you know. I may decide to go myself in another year. I should hate it, but——"

"Oh, you are from Boston!" exclaimed Mrs. Clyde, lightly. "You Boston people all take life so seriously! Why borrow trouble? Peace may be declared at any moment. Who knows? But I must run! Good-by, children! Juliet, don't let Elizabeth stir, will you? Just look after her carefully, there's a dear! Good-by, everybody!"

She left the room, and in the momentary silence which followed her departure they heard her high-heeled shoes tapping along the hard wood floor of the long hall. Juliet suddenly decided to do what a few minutes ago she would have declared

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was impossible. She turned to Mark Holbrook and held out her hand.

"I should like to shake hands with you," she said. Her face grew scarlet, but she looked him straight in the eyes. "That is, if you don't mind—for I do like what you said, and—I want to thank you for being so kind about the coat yesterday. It probably saved me from taking cold."

She turned hastily away for those brown eyes, which could look so solemnly through the spectacles, were full of amusement. He was laughing at her! She hated to be laughed at, and if that was the way he took her attempt at an apology—but he was saying something.

"That is mighty nice of you, Miss Waring, for I had been rather nasty, and rather stupid, too. I don't wonder much that you didn't like me. I mean it! Suppose we call it off, shall we? Let's laugh and be friends,—for it is rather funny, you know!"

"Is it?" said Juliet, somewhat doubtfully. "I—that is—" she turned to Tony: "Does Mr. Holbrook laugh at everything?"

"He does if he possibly can. Although he is generally known as 'the sage,' he is rather given to

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grinning at times. I suppose that is what binds me to him. Intellectually, he is too much for the likes of poor little me! What do you think he has been reading to my poor little sister, there? A little lame prisoner who can't escape!"

"What?" Her tone was interested, for she loved books.

"The *Bacchæ*' of Euripides!" laughed Tony.

"Oh!" said Juliet, with a little catching of her breath.

"Oh, shucks!" exclaimed Mark, scowling at him. "Tony, I wish you'd shut up!"

Juliet hesitated; then she turned to Mark. "Gilbert Murray's translation?" she asked, eagerly.

"Yes! Do you know it?"

"I love it!" she said, with the smile that kindled her face into actual beauty, and now there was real friendship in her eyes. "I wish you would make Tony read it!"

Tony laughed, and waved his oily rags at them. "He'd find it some job!" said he. "Bless you, my children!"

The boys went off, and life settled down again into its usual routine at Clyde Corners, except



She could help Elizabeth to keep up her studies.

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that Elizabeth had become something of an invalid. Her knee continued to be painful and troublesome, and the specialist who came from New York to examine it agreed with the doctor at Clyde Corners that for the present she should not use it. This meant that she could not go to school, but must spend her days on a sofa, or hobble on crutches from one room to another, or to the front door for a drive.

Miss Brown had resumed her duties at the Clydes', and at once made herself more valuable than ever, for she could help Elizabeth to keep up her studies, could read with her, and amuse her in many ways. Mrs. Clyde thought of her with great satisfaction, and it certainly seemed an excellent arrangement. She and Elizabeth were the best of friends, and it was with a mind free from care that Mrs. Clyde increased the governess's salary, and continued to attend to her own many activities in New York as well as in Clyde Corners.

The arrangement was for Miss Brown to be at the Clydes' house every morning at nine o'clock and to stay until nine at night, with the exception of Saturday. That day was her own to do

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with as she liked. Sometimes she spent it in New York, but often she passed it in the country, taking long walks by herself or with Juliet, and perhaps going home with Juliet for a cup of tea in the afternoon, or going with her to have tea with Elizabeth as a valued friend and guest, rather than the governess.

One Saturday morning in late February, FredERICA Brown left the Clyde Corners Inn soon after eight o'clock, and walking down Garland Street through the town until she had crossed the railroad at the station, she took the road to the left which followed the course of the Clyde River. It was the same road over which the donkey team had traveled the day of Elizabeth's accident. They, however, had been going north, and FredERICA now turned south, in the direction of New York.

It was a glorious morning. It was cold, but there was no wind. A great white peace lay over the land. Nothing stirred, and there was a strange silence. The snow had a blue tinge, and the mist that hung above it was also of a pale, beautiful blue. It being yet early in the morning, the rays of the sun fell slantingly, and there

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was some warmth in them, for it was a February sun. Frederica stood still for a moment, and looked back toward the town. The church steeples gleamed in the golden-blue light—those white steeples which to the people who lived near them seemed so ancient and venerable because they had been built at least one hundred and fifty years ago. She smiled rather scornfully as she thought of this, even while she appreciated keenly the beauty of the scene. What were a hundred and fifty years? What were these plain white churches, built of wood, compared with—some other beautiful buildings, somewhere else?

She turned away and walked quickly over the road, which at times was close to the river. She wished that the snow which covered its frozen surface as well as the meadows which lay beyond could cover also all the thought of what she was about to undertake. She must not allow these doubts to arise in her mind, as they were so apt to do when she was alone. When she was with Ida Fischer, she never remembered anything but her duty to her own dear country, but when she was by herself she thought of the few friends she had made in America, and of what their opinion

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of her would be if they knew—if they could know “the plan.”

“But it is my duty,” she said to herself, and then she repeated it aloud. It seemed to make it more sure.

After walking for a mile or so she came to car tracks over which an electric car would shortly pass that would take her to her destination. She was not mistaken, for she had timed herself carefully. The car soon appeared in sight, and presently she was seated in it. The passengers already in it were people from another town whom she had never seen before. It was for this reason that she had taken the walk, for it would have been shorter to go to the ferry that was her destination by the car that ran there from Clyde Corners, but she preferred not to be seen by any one who would know her.

The car turned into the main road to New York at Woodford, where she left it, and walking quickly, she made her way to the ferry which plied between the New Jersey and the New York sides of the Hudson River. She had not long to wait here, for the boat came in and was made

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fast to its slip just five minutes after she reached the landing.

A closed motor car was the only automobile on the boat at that early hour. It came off rather slowly, stopped at the corner of the road which led to the town of Woodford, and waited. Some one inside opened the door and Frederica got in; the door was shut, and the car moved off. It was all so quietly and quickly done that it was quite certain that no one noticed her, and if she had been seen to get in, no one who was there would have thought that it was strange. The car climbed a hill, turned to the right, and was soon moving swiftly over a road which led to Clyde Corners, but which entered the town far above the thickly settled part of it; it was indeed almost on the summit of the Palisades for the greater part of the way.

In the car Frederica found her friends the Fischers, who received her with a cordiality that was flattering. Mr. Fischer was driving the car, which was a large and spacious limousine, and which was packed with quantities of boxes and cases, so that in spite of its size there was scarcely room for the three passengers. They met no one,

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for the road on the Palisades was not much frequented at this season, and the few houses which they passed were closed and boarded for the season, as they were residences that were occupied only in the summer.

The one exception to this was the Farrington house, as it had always been known in Clyde Corners, but which belonged now to Mr. Fischer. The blinds were open, and it had a much more "lived-in" look than when the party of boys and girls had explored its basement in the Christmas holidays. As the car drew up at the door, a man came out from the basement entrance and walked toward them, holding up his hand in greeting. Frederica, when she saw who it was, gave a little gasp and shrank back into her corner, for it was her brother-in-law. He was a tall, powerfully built man, with a large nose and a fierce expression, and although his hair was dark, the grayness of his skin gave him a look of age.

"I did not know that Rudolph was here!" Frederica whispered to Mrs. Fischer. "And Olga—is she here, too?"

"Yes, for a week or so. They are helping us," replied her friend, as she gathered up some of the

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baskets and boxes that were beside her on the seat, and made ready to get out.

Mr. Rudolph Drumm greeted his sister-in-law more pleasantly than usual, his respect for her having increased somewhat since she had been earning her own living so successfully, and since she no longer lived under the same roof with him. The fact that the wealthy and greatly-to-be-respected Fischers said excellent praise of her also influenced him to no small degree. They were finding her useful, and for the first time in his memory, he was finding her useful, too. He suggested to her now that she should lend a hand, and he called at the same time to Olga, who came running out of the house. The three women and the men were soon busy enough, carrying to the basement the boxes and cases with which the car was filled, and which they stacked up carefully, piling one upon another with perfect precision.

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to dress like a very small child. Would you be willing to do that?"

"Of course I would! I'll do anything not to be left out. I simply can't be left out. I'll be a small baby in long clothes if you like, only I'd be awfully heavy for you to carry, wouldn't I? But I'll be anything, if only you don't leave me out if there's going to be dressing up. You know how I adore dressing up."

"I know you do, and this is going to be the most exciting dressing up we ever did in our lives—far more so than when we did the beggar children, or even the missionary's family. It is going to be simply thrilling, I can tell you that!"

"Then do tell us quickly what it is!" exclaimed Dorothy. "I can't wait another minute."

"Let's go up to your room," suggested Mildred, importantly. "We want a safe place to talk it over in where no one will hear us. Is your mother at home?"

"No, she has gone to New York, and of course Miss Brown isn't here as it is Saturday, and Elizabeth is in her room, and Juliet is coming up soon to spend the day with her. Couldn't we tell Elizabeth? She loves to hear our plans, you

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know, and she wouldn't stop our doing anything. It is so pokey for her to stay quiet all the time."

"I know it is, and I'm really truly sorry we can't, but it wouldn't do at all as long as Juliet is coming. I'm awfully sorry not to trust my own sister as much as I do yours. Elizabeth would let us do anything, but Juliet would make an awful fuss about this particular idea, and say it wasn't at all proper, and all that sort of stuff. Juliet is so fearfully fussy about some things. No, we shall have to keep very quiet about this, if we want to carry it through."

"Oh, I'm so glad to hear you say it isn't at all proper!" exclaimed Dorothy, giving a little hop of joy. "I do adore doing things that Juliet thinks are not proper!"

"She would certainly be down on us for this!" said Mildred, as the three entered the large, sunny room which had been the Clyde children's nursery, and was now a playroom for Dorothy and Lucy.

An open wood fire burned on the hearth, and three small chairs were at once drawn up in front of it in which the three conspirators seated themselves for their consultation. Mildred's golden head tossed, and her thin, alert face glowed with

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eagerness, as she imparted to her friends the wonderful inspiration which had come to her, and which had first dawned upon her as she was getting ready for breakfast that morning.

"It popped right into my head and just stayed there," said she. "We've never done it before, and I don't see why we haven't, for it is going to be so very easy. It's maids, looking for a place."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Dorothy and Lucy together. "I never heard of anything so lovely!"

They required no further explanation; they knew instantly that these cryptic words could mean but the one thing; they meant that Mildred and Dorothy, both tall for their age, were to dress as maids, and go forth to act the parts at some house in the neighborhood. They were accustomed to acting, for they were all members of a club of six girls who called themselves "The Social Six," and whose custom was to do entertaining things like acting plays. Already these plays had been so good and were so well acted that they had raised money for the local charities. Mildred's "star part" was that of an Irish girl, and she could do the brogue to perfection. She always "brought down the house" when she

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exclaimed "Begorra!" or said, "Shure, an' it's mesilf that's arfther doin' it!" or other phrases of a like nature.

Both Mildred and Dorothy "made up" into quite grown up young women, and there was no doubt as to their ability to look the part; as to Lucy, Mildred, making a virtue of necessity, declared that a child led by the hand would add considerably to the effect. As usual, Mildred was stage manager, the other two submitting to her commands with absolute obedience. They had supreme confidence in her, knowing from long experience that she made the best captain of the three.

"The first thing is to see what we can manage in the way of costumes," she decreed. "Of course the Irish girl will be easy enough. That velvet hat your mother gave us with the feathers, and that blue suit we always use will do for one of us, and of course we can fix up Lucy as a child. We've done that often enough before. We'll make her about six years old, I think. It's the widow who's going to be troublesome. How are we ever going to get up a widow? Are there any black things in the house at all?"

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Dorothy and Lucy pondered for a minute or two, and then a smile of satisfaction spread over Dorothy's face and she sprang to her feet. "You just wait!" she cried, and ran from the room.

While she was gone, Mildred and Lucy collected the other garments and began to put them on, Mildred first arranging her hair on the top of her head. That alone made a great difference in her appearance, for it usually hung in a mass of golden curls about her face and shoulders. Taking it away, twisting it into a tight knob high on the top, and then covering her head entirely with a large hat, made her almost unrecognizable. The hat was ornamented with a bunch of bright purple feathers, placed at such an angle that it was dangerous for any one to venture near their wearer on that side. She was dressed in a dark blue suit, and gray gloves covered her youthful and somewhat slender hands, which were scarcely the hands of a girl who did hard work. In this costume it would be a difficult matter for any one to believe that it was Mildred Waring and not Delia O'Brian, as she had decided to call herself.

Lucy was almost as well disguised, in a short

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red frock, a little coat of dark cloth, and a muff and boa of ermine, all of which had been saved from their childish days for the very purpose of "dressing up." Her hair hung loose down her back and was surmounted by a tam o'shanter of red worsted.

"If you keep your hair well over your face no one could possibly know you," said Mildred, as she gave her the finishing touches.

The door of the room opened and a figure entered, slowly and sedately. This person was draped in black, and held a handkerchief to her eyes.

"Dorothy!" exclaimed the others. "How perfectly splendid! Is it really you?"

"It is mesilf, an' no other!" said a sepulchral voice from behind the handkerchief. "Me husband is dead, an' me left wid me only child, an' I must worrk out once more, more's the pity!" And then the sad and mourning figure began to dance about the room, the crepe veil thrown back, and a merry face laughing from under its heavy folds. "Girls, did you ever see anything so wonderful? I knew mother had them put away for I came across the box the other day when I was

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rummaging in the attic. It was marked 'mourning, to be given away,' so of course it is all right for us to take it."

"It's perfectly great," said Mildred. "What do you think about me? If I put this old purple feather boa up round my neck rather tight, do you think any one could possibly recognize me?"

"They couldn't possibly!" declared Dorothy and Lucy.

"All right, then, and now let's start. When we get safely out I will tell you where I think it would be fun to go."

A few minutes later the side door closed behind them. As they came around the house and left the place by the upper gate they saw Juliet approaching the front door from the other entrance.

"My, what a narrow escape!" murmured Mildred as they turned up Garland Street.

Juliet looked after them with some interest as she stood on the piazza waiting to be admitted. Then she went up to Elizabeth's room.

"A woman in the deepest kind of mourning just went out of here," she said, "and she was leading such a queer, gawky, overgrown child!

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You don't usually see people in such very deep mourning. There was another woman with them who had the child by the other hand, but she wasn't in black."

"They were friends of the maids, I suppose," said Elizabeth, and then they thought no more about them.

In the big stone house on the Palisades which had now become the property of Mr. Otto Fischer, three women were hard at work. Mr. Fischer, trusted agent of one of the big steamship lines which until August, 1914, plied between the United States and Germany, was a man of considerable wealth, but notwithstanding this, his wife, true to her German up-bringing, was herself dusting and cleaning and polishing, assisted with equal industry and thoroughness by Mrs. Drumm and Frederica Brown. They had all taken the precaution to wear old dresses under their long coats, and having put on their large aprons they were ready for any form of work. When the car had been emptied and run into the garage, the two men of the party retired to one of the rooms on the first floor to smoke

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and discuss their plans, comfortably confident that an excellent luncheon would be served for them at the proper hour, and that no further effort on their part would be in any way necessary. Even when the doorbell rang they did not stir; the women would attend to all such things.

Among the women the sound of the bell made a slight sensation. Who could it be? No one was supposed to know that they were there, and they were so far from the town that it was not likely that any one would be passing and so see the open blinds.

"Will you go to it, Rika, if you please," said Mrs. Fischer. "Or wait! I had better send Olga, for if it should be any one from Clyde Corners you would be recognized. Do you go, Olga, if you please! It may be a tradesman. They are always the first to find out the arrival of strangers. Tell him we have all we need. The only thing I do wish to find if it is possible is a woman to do some cleaning. I dared not bring one of my maids from town, for faithful as they are, we do not wish them to find out anything here. Hurry, Olga, if you please! They are ringing again!"

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Mrs. Drumm hastened down the stairs. She opened the door at one end of the long wide hall which divided the house on the first floor. At the other end was another door which led to the high piazza overlooking the river. The front door opened upon a smaller porch, connected with the driveway by a broad flight of steps. On this porch stood three figures, two women and a child.

"Good mornin'!" said one of the women. The other, who was heavily draped in black, was engaged in quieting the child who, at sight of Mrs. Drumm, had begun to cry. "Can we see the lady of the house?"

"What do you wish?" asked Mrs. Drumm, staring at them with her large round eyes.

"Well, we're arfther lookin' for a place, me an' me frind here. We heard as how this house had been rinted an' the folks movin' in, an' we come to the conclusion as how it moight be wor-r-th our while to stip up an' inquire, so to spake. We've niver lived out in this town, but we've heard tell allus about the place, an' we'd both of us rather loike to give it a try. But per'aps the lady is alriddy suited, for if you're

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the help yersilf, she wouldn't be arfther wantin' anny wan ilse, would she now?"

"I am not the help!" exclaimed Mrs. Drumm angrily. "I do not zee how a mistake so extraordinary you could haf made!"

"Excuse *me!*" said Delia O'Brian. "It's strange now, ain't it, what mistakes we'll make with the bist intintions in the wor-r-ld? Thin mebbe you're arfther bein' the lady of the house hersilf?"

"No, I am not, but I am a friend of hers. If you will enter, I will tell her that you are here."

For Olga remembered suddenly that Mrs. Fischer had just said that the one thing she wished for was a woman to do some cleaning. The three visitors crossed the threshold with alacrity, and were told to wait in the hall while she went to summon the mistress of the house. She ascended the stairs in some indignation, and angrily told Mrs. Fischer that some women were down there who were looking for work, whom it would be well for her to interview herself; for her part, she declined to speak to them again. Yes, they were respectable-looking, and strangers in the town, she had understood.

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"Oh, then, Rika, if they are strangers you could go down, for you would not be recognized. I am just in the midst of this work. You go down and find out what they can do. I only want them for hard cleaning. It would be excellent to have them for this rough work. What, a child with them? Then, Rika, engage the woman without the child and let the others go. We do not wish a child poking and prying into everything!"

In the meantime, down in the hall the three persons waiting for the lady of the house were becoming somewhat impatient. There were no chairs, so they remained standing. The moment Mrs. Drumm's back was turned, they were seized with an attack of some kind which caused them all to shake violently. It was accompanied by strange sputtering sounds, and the three victims of it were obliged to clasp their mouths tightly with their hands. Delia O'Brian was the first to regain her self-control. She addressed her companions in tones of severity, but in a whisper.

"You've got to be quiet! We mustn't laugh! There are some men in one of those rooms. I heard them talking, and now they've stopped. I

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smell tobacco smoke, too. We've got to be awfully careful."

Perfect stillness followed this admonition, and presently they again heard the voices of the men in conversation, but they could not hear what was said. It seemed a long time before the lady of the house came down, and Lucy amused herself by giving a loud sob every now and then. It made the others find it more difficult than ever to keep from laughing, but they could not induce her to refrain from such a pleasant pastime, and she sobbed steadily and at regular intervals until there happened something so unexpected and thrilling that she was startled into silence.

Mildred had turned to Lucy to beg and command her to be quiet, Dorothy was struggling with her laughter and had also turned toward her sister, when a man's voice was heard addressing them. They all looked up in quick surprise, and found standing close beside them a tall, rather heavily built man, with brown hair and beard, and small blue eyes that were regarding them keenly and with some surprise through gold rimmed spectacles.

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“Is that child in pain?” he asked, gruffly.

It was a perceptible moment before the answer came, and it was Mildred who made it. She was so frightened that for the first few words she forgot her brogue.

“No, she’s not! She’s awfully provoking. I knew——” and then she remembered. “Shure, an’ it’s not in pain she is at all, at all! It’s only downright bad she is, cryin’ an’ wailin’ the loikes o’ this in a gintleman’s house!”

“What are you waiting for? Have you seen my wife?”

“Shure an’ it must be hersilf we’re waitin’ to see, for the lady who let us in has gone to get the lady of the house.”

The man looked at them doubtfully. He then went back to the room in which he had been sitting and said a word to his companion who came out into the hall to look at the callers. The first man was just about to go upstairs when he saw Frederica Brown coming. She was walking along the gallery which on the second floor surrounded a great open space extending from the first floor to the third. In the center of this a wide stair-

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case ascended. It was therefore possible to see from the lower hall the approach of Miss Brown.

And Mildred saw her coming. She turned to the others. "Run!" she said. "Run for your lives!"

CHAPTER XVI

MR. DRUMM IS SERIOUSLY ALARMED

DELIA O'BRIAN and her friends went out of the front door like a flash. They ran down the steps, and being perfectly familiar with the place, they took the short cut under the piazza and then crossed the open space into the woods, precisely as they had all done the last time they were there.

When Mr. Fischer and Miss Brown reached the front door they could see no sign of the strangers; they hurried out to the entrance and looked up and down, to right and left, as did also Mr. Rudolph Drumm, who had hastily followed them. The two women and the child had vanished as suddenly and as mysteriously as they had come. The men then made a careful examination of the premises, but this revealed nothing, and they returned to the house. They were uneasy over the peculiar occurrence, however, and Mrs. Drumm was severely rebuked by her hus-

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band for having been so careless as to admit three strangers, no matter how innocent and harmless they may have appeared to be.

"I have no doubt that they were agents of the Secret Service," said he, and his manner showed his real anxiety. "Since diplomatic relations with our beloved country have been broken off, there is no limit to their activities. They are spying on us everywhere in the most unpardonable manner."

The Fischers and Frederica did not agree with him in this opinion. They tried to point out to him that it was impossible that persons connected with the Secret Service should attract attention to themselves by such eccentric conduct. But Drumm swept these objections aside with a gesture of contempt.

"Naturally!" said he. "To us Germans who do all things well, it would so seem. These childish Yankees are capable of any foolishness. Olga is greatly to blame for allowing them to enter. Certainly no maids looking for work would behave as those extraordinary creatures conducted themselves. The so-called child's sobs were forced in expression; they were not natural. No real child could weep as did that one. The sobs came

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at intervals—not in irregular outbursts of tears. They gave no impression either of pain or of sorrow.”

And although it was explained to him in great detail that there was nothing about the child as she stood on the steps that suggested the Secret Service, and he was told that Mrs. Fischer herself had requested that they be interviewed and one of them be engaged to work in the house, it was long before Olga was forgiven. His displeasure lasted for many days, increased by the unfortunate disarrangement of all their plans which resulted from the visit of the mysterious maids.

For it was decided to go immediately back to New York, and not to occupy the house again until all danger of discovery should be removed. After much discussion, the boxes brought out that morning were carried up to the attic, and there hidden away and locked up in a large closet. By night the shades were drawn or the shutters closed, and the old Farrington house had resumed its former appearance of being uninhabited.

The three girls who had been the unsuspecting cause of this complete change of plan reached

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the wood in safety, but they continued to run until they were at least half a mile from the house. Then, breathless, they stopped at last, and leaning against a convenient fence, they gave way to their laughter, which they had been struggling with as they ran.

"We never before did anything so perfect!" screamed Dorothy. There was not the least danger of being heard, and it was such a comfort to scream as loud as one liked! "I couldn't have borne it another minute, but I never thought of running away. Mil, you are certainly the little wonder! To think of going there in the first place was simply wonderful! And what luck to get away before Miss Brown came down! I could scarcely believe my eyes when I looked up and saw her marching along that gallery! I was simply scared stiff and didn't know what to do. What a mercy you thought of running away! It was simply great. Do you think she knew us?"

"She couldn't possibly. She didn't even see us, I'm sure. I knew it was the only thing to do," Mildred gasped. "It was the man who scared me. Lucy, you were—well, you were simply outrageous to cry that way, with those aw-

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fully loud horrible sobs—but you were terribly funny, and it made it so much more exciting to have the man pounce on us the way he did that I can't scold you as you ought to be scolded."

"I should say not!" replied Lucy, complacently. "I must say I did that sobbing pretty well. And now let's go home and tell the girls about it."

"What do you think, Mil?" asked Dorothy. "It seems as if we might, don't you think so? Even if Juliet does scold, we may as well have the fun of telling them. They may just as well know that we younger girls can do a thing like that. They are so stuck up over being older than we are."

Mildred hesitated about agreeing to this, for she knew something of her sister's intense loyalty to the governess, and she was afraid that Juliet would be very indignant because they had played the trick upon Miss Brown's friends, but after talking it over with Dorothy and Lucy she finally yielded to their arguments.

"Why should Juliet mind at all?" asked Lucy, reasonably enough. "We hadn't the least idea we were going to find Miss Brown there! I am sure we were scared stiff when we saw her come

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along that gallery, and we ran right off. How were we ever to know it until we saw her? She has never told us that it is her friends who have taken the Farrington house."

"I suppose Juliet knows it," said Dorothy, "and so she will think we ought to have known it, too."

"I don't believe she does," said Mildred. "There is certainly something very queer about Miss Brown, and I know lots of people think so too, but dear me, how old Ju does stand up for her! Well, let's go home to your house now and tell. Let's get some more fun out of it if we can. It's a grand morning! I never had such fun in my life, girls, did you?"

"Never!" agreed the lady in mourning and her child.

They hurried home and found Elizabeth and Juliet in Elizabeth's sitting-room. As the three entered, their sisters looked up from their work and laughed.

"So you are the ladies I saw as I came in!" said Juliet. "I might have guessed it if I had stopped to think, for I never have seen such queer objects. What have you been up to now?"

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"Oh, children!" laughed Elizabeth. "You are too ridiculous! Dorothy, where did you unearth those things? Do they belong to Mamma?"

"Yes, they were up in the attic, but she had marked them to be given away, so it was all right for me to take them. Oh, girls, we've had the time of our lives! Just wait till you hear about it—but first I must take off this awful veil. It weighs about a ton."

"It certainly has been a success," said Mildred. "Who'll be the one to tell?"

"You ought to be, for you were the one to think of it," said Dorothy, and as Lucy agreed with equal magnanimity, Mildred proceeded "to tell."

"We were maids, looking for a place," she began.

"I hope you didn't go to any one we knew!" put in Juliet.

"No, we didn't—not to regular Clyde Corners people, if you mean that, but please hush, and don't interrupt if you can possibly help it. When you hear what happened I'm afraid you won't be able to help it. I knew you would make a fuss if we went to any one's house we knew, so we chose

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the only house where we were sure we wouldn't be likely to know any one." This was said with a mischievous glance at her companions in the adventure.

"I don't see where that could be, for you know almost every one in the place."

"No, we didn't know the new people up in the Farrington house."

"You don't mean to say you went all the way up there in those clothes?"

"We sure did!" laughed Mildred, relapsing into slang, "and what's more, we got there, all right, and what's more still, we got in!"

"Are the people in the house?" asked Elizabeth. "I thought they were only going to use the place in summer." She was enjoying the account, for life was somewhat dull for her just now, and she was glad to have something so amusing to break its monotony. Then, too, she always looked more leniently than Juliet did on the children's mad pranks.

"They are there," replied Mildred. "First an awfully funny looking person came to the door. She had a long face, and round eyes, very large and staring."

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At this, Juliet looked up quickly. Her sudden movement was not lost upon Mildred; she saw that her sister was interested, although she did not know why.

"She was awfully offended because when I found she wasn't the lady I thought she might be the maid. My, but she was mad! Just hopping! But she said the lady might want to engage us, and she would go and see, so she left us standing down in the hall for perfect ages. And then a man came out of one of the rooms and came straight to us. We were scared blue. He came pouncing out at us because Lucy was making the most awful noise crying. We couldn't stop her pretending to give a great big sob every other second, and this man thought she was ill or suffering or something, and came to see what was the matter with her, and then who do you think we saw just going to come downstairs to speak to us?"

"Who? The lady of the house, I suppose."

"Not at all—unless she is the one who has taken the Farrington house! There is a great big gallery in the second story, with doors opening on to it, I suppose from the bedrooms, and

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there is a balustrade all around it except where the stairs go up. It is really a very grand sort of a house. And who do you think we all saw coming along that gallery? We all looked up, and we every one of us saw her, so there was no mistake."

"I haven't the least idea," said Juliet.

"Nor I either," said Elizabeth. "Do hurry up and tell us!"

"Miss Frederica Brown!"

"Mildred!" exclaimed Elizabeth and Juliet with one voice.

"Sure as I'm sitting here."

"You must be dreaming," said Juliet, severely.

"You are talking very foolishly."

"Then we are all three dreaming," said Mildred, calmly. She turned to her two friends. "Are we dreaming? Am I talking foolishly? Who came along the upstairs gallery, and started to come down the stairs?"

"Miss Brown," said they.

It was impossible to doubt their word, for they were truth-telling children, and neither Juliet nor Elizabeth thought for an instant that they were inventing this tale, but it was equally impossible

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for them to believe that anything so extraordinary could have taken place.

"If it really was Frederica, she must have seen you and recognized you," said Juliet.

"No, she didn't, for we were out the front door before she got downstairs. It was a lucky thing for us that the man had left us and gone back to the door of the room he came out of, for he might have grabbed us if he had been near us when we started to run, and then she would have come, and she might have known us. She *might* have, but I think we did it pretty well, and maybe she wouldn't have!"

"She certainly would," said Juliet; then she laughed. "You are too ridiculous, children, with your dressing up, and you are very conceited about it, but I must say you are a success at it! I am rather glad to hear that Frederica has some friends here now. It was probably her sister who came to the door, with the long face and the staring eyes. Did you ever see such perfectly round eyes? I met her in Frederica's room once. It is funny she hasn't told me about her friends, but of course she will. She hasn't thought of it, I

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suppose. I am so glad for her that they have come!"

After all, Juliet was taking it remarkably well, as Mildred telegraphed to Dorothy by a glance of satisfaction. As she said to her and Lucy later, when she had an opportunity to speak to them in private: "You never can be quite sure of old Ju. She may get mad, and then again she may not. I think it was because we didn't say a word against her dear Frederica! If you do, she always thinks she has got to stand up for her. Girls, there was one thing I thought it was better not to mention just now."

"What?" they asked together.

"I think, as I have thought all along, that there is really something a little queer about Miss Brown. I think—I am almost certain—that those men were talking German in that room!"

"Mildred! Not really! Are you sure?"

"Yes, pretty certain! But let's not say anything yet, for perhaps we can have some more fun out of it. We will go up soon and have a look, for it may turn out to be a 'spy house' after all! I think we had better ask Miss Brown a few questions, perhaps, before we say a word to any

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one else, just to see how she manages to wriggle out of it! Juliet can stand up for her for all she's worth, but I know what I think Miss Brown may possibly be, and George thinks the same. I just long to tell George all about this morning. I guess he'll think we amount to something, even if we are nothing but girls!"

Although Juliet felt confident that Frederica would tell her that her friends had bought the Farrington place, as day after day went by she showed no sign of having any intention of doing so, and there was no denying the fact that her silence hurt. Juliet wished that she could believe that the younger girls had been mistaken. She did not think that they had not spoken the truth, but was it not possible that they had thought it was Frederica when really it was some one else? But this idea she was always forced to dismiss quickly as being quite out of the question. Of course those three girls knew the governess too well to be mistaken—and besides, Frederica had friends named "Fisher" whom she visited in New York. Juliet did not know that their name was spelt with the tell-tale "C" and did not suspect for an instant that those friends were Germans.

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Hearing that a man of the name had bought the Farrington house, she was obliged to admit to herself that he might very easily prove to be the husband of Frederica's friend. She did not discuss the matter with any one, not even with Elizabeth.

CHAPTER XVII

AT THE RED CROSS ROOMS

A WEEK or two passed by with nothing very different in the daily life at Clyde Corners to mark the days, but with much to occupy the minds and hearts of all the people, old and young alike. Diplomatic relations with Germany had now been broken off, the busy Ambassador had been sent home at last, and every day brought nearer the hour which to many had seemed too long in coming—the hour when war should be declared by this country.

In the little town of Clyde Corners there had been much activity for some time in Red Cross work, but the probability of going into the war ourselves, when our own men would be in need of help, had brought home to people a great sense of necessity, and many appeals had been made in the local papers as well as in other ways for more women and girls to come to the rooms to sew and to make surgical dressings. This work was done

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in a large building belonging to the town which had been given to the Clyde Corners Branch of the Red Cross, and the rooms were open every day. Elizabeth Clyde, whose knee was slowly recovering, went there regularly, and Juliet was there whenever she could spare the time, for she of course was busy at school in the morning.

One afternoon in March, Juliet, who had just come from school and was on her way from the station, happened to meet Frederica Brown, who seemed to be out for a walk.

"I have a holiday," said she. "The children are off somewhere for the afternoon, and Mrs. Clyde is away, you know. I have done everything she left for me to attend to, and she told me before she went that if I had, I could take the time off and do what I liked, and now do you know I can't think of anything I wish to do! Is it not aggravating? Perhaps you can suggest some pleasant way of passing the afternoon."

"I wish I could do something with you, but I have promised to be at the rooms."

"The rooms?"

"Yes, the Red Cross rooms, I mean. Oh, Frederica, don't you want to go there with me? I

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know you usually haven't time to go, which is why you have never been there, but here you are with a free afternoon, and I do wish you would come with me! Of course it isn't as much fun as doing something else would be, but I should think you would be glad of a chance, for the work is so much needed. Do come with me! Is Elizabeth there?"

"I believe so."

"She usually is, and she does beautiful dressings. She and I always work together in the smaller room where they are supposed to do the most particular kind, for they are pleased to consider us good workers. It is a great compliment, I can tell you, to be praised by their High Mightinesses! You are so clever with your hands, Frederica, that you will be able to do it right off. You can sit between Elizabeth and me, and do them exactly as we do, and I know you will pick it up at once. The directors will be only too glad to have a good person come in to help."

She talked so steadily and rapidly, and was so full of her wish to have her friend with her, that she did not at first notice Frederica's hesi-

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tation. When she paused and still no answer came, she asked with a certain abruptness of manner which showed that she was puzzled or annoyed:

"What's the matter? Don't you want to come?"

"Oh, surely!" said Frederica, hastily. "That is"—she hesitated—"if you think it will be all right."

"Of course it will be all right! Why shouldn't it be? I tell you we need workers very much, and they have asked each one of us to bring in one new person at least, and here is my chance to do it. Ah, do come with me, Frederica! That is, unless you would rather stay out of doors, as you have a holiday. It does seem rather a shame to make you go in and work, but you said you didn't know what to do."

"Yes, that is true. I did not know, but now I do. I will come with you."

Both Rudolph and Herr Fischer had urged her to visit the Red Cross rooms at Clyde Corners in order to report to them the amount of work that was being done there, but until now she had refused to oblige them. She regarded it as a

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singular coincidence that she should have met Juliet on her way there. Might it not be the hand of fate? And was it not her duty to serve the Fatherland in small things as in large?

The two girls entered the building, and when they had removed their outdoor things and had put on aprons and caps, Juliet led the way up to the large room on the second floor where the surgical dressings were made. This room was filled with long tables at which a number of women and girls sat at work. In the white kerchiefs that were folded on their heads and which hung about their faces it was difficult to recognize them, and Frederica, entering quietly, felt after a hasty glance that perhaps she also would be unnoticed and unrecognized in her cap, and she became less nervous. She had not wished to come for several reasons, one being the fact that Miss Andrews, Miss Baxter, and one or two other ladies who boarded at the Clyde Corners Inn, were faithful workers at the Red Cross rooms, and she dreaded meeting them. However, the "hand of fate" had led her there, and now she would gather up what information she could.

The number of workers was certainly large,

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and there seemed to be no scarcity of materials for dressings, as Rudolph had maintained was the case. They had passed one or two persons on the stairs who were carrying home huge skeins of yarn to be knit, and as she glanced in at the Sewing Room at the head of the stairs, she saw many women at work there, and had heard the sound of a number of sewing machines. It was sad to think that in the dear Fatherland there might very possibly be neither wool nor cotton for the Cause!

There was a desk at the entrance of the Surgical Dressings Room, placed just inside of the door, and on it was an open registry book. "We all write down our names when we come in," said Juliet, as she took the pencil. "I will register you, if you like."

"Why do you do that?" asked Frederica, with some return of nervousness.

"Oh, they like to keep account of how many are here each day, and to see who does come, for of course they have to be careful."

"Careful of what?"

"Oh, I don't know exactly!"

Juliet in her turn became slightly embarrassed.

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It suddenly crossed her mind that there might be objections on the part of some of the people to Frederica's presence. The mere thought of this made her angry, and she was glad that it had occurred to her in time to be prepared for whatever might happen. She would be ready to stand by Frederica "through thick and thin," as a true friend should. She laid down the pencil, and with a little movement of straightening herself to meet anything that might occur, she told Frederica to come with her into the smaller room that opened from the one they were in, the door of which was close at hand. In this room there were but two long tables, but there were shelves piled high with packages, and huge bales of materials occupied every inch of available space. Elizabeth at the moment was the only person working there. She greeted them with evident pleasure, and when Juliet explained her plan of teaching Frederica immediately to do what she was engaged in, she agreed to it at once.

"I knew you would learn quickly!" said Juliet, as she watched Miss Brown do with perfect precision and nicety the task which she herself had accomplished only after hours of practice. "You

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do the most wonderful work with your hands, Frederica! I am so glad you could come this afternoon, and I do hope you will be able to come often."

"I shall ask Mamma to let you come whenever she can spare you," said Elizabeth, "and I am sure she will. Now that we are probably going into the war ourselves, she feels differently about it. I shouldn't wonder if she dropped everything else now for war work. Oh, how I wish I were a man and could go off and fight myself! It seems so little just to knit, and do these foldings and patings and punchings!"

"There is some comfort in thinking that every fold and pat and punch is going to help a man who has fought for us, though!" said Juliet. "It seems queer, doesn't it, though, to think that the women in Germany are all just as busy doing just the same thing, and feeling that they are doing the right thing, too! Oh, Frederica, that isn't quite right! Just let me show you again, for it isn't quite firm enough the way you are doing it now."

"Ah, yes!" murmured Frederica. "I did not quite understand." She hoped that her friends

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had not noticed how her hands had trembled when Juliet had spoken of the women of Germany. Her hands were hidden by the table now, and she kept them there while Juliet instructed her once more about the dressing. When she tried again it was with no better result, which puzzled Juliet considerably, for at first Frederica had appeared to be so clever at the work.

They were both giving such close attention to it that they did not see several ladies come to the door and look at them silently, but with evident disapproval. Elizabeth, who chanced to glance at them, was struck by the expression of the faces of the three—Miss Baxter, Miss Andrews, and their friend Miss Snow. The last named lady was a relative of Admiral Kent and Mrs. Cornish, and lived with them on Lyman Street in the house next to the Warings. She was an ardent worker for the Red Cross, and was one of the Executive Board.

They moved away, and very soon Bertha Rufford came into the room. Bertha was Chairman of the Surgical Dressings Committee, and was therefore a person of some importance. She approached the table where the girls were seated,

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and after greeting them she stood there silently for a few moments and watched them.

"I hope we are doing them to suit your Royal Highness!" said Juliet, smiling across the table at her cousin's wife. "Do you see that I have done as you requested and have brought you a new worker? And she is doing mighty good work, too! I'm very proud of her."

"I see!" said Bertha, gravely. Then after another little pause she said: "Juliet, I want to speak to you please! Will you come to the Committee Room for a minute?"

Juliet rose at once and followed her. She knew of course what Bertha was about to say.

"Let us sit down," said Bertha, "and do please take it easily, Juliet!"

"You mean by sitting down? Then give me a more comfortable chair than any I see here, and perhaps I can!"

Juliet said this with an air of flippancy in order to hide her real anxiety. It was unusual for Bertha to summon her to an interview at the rooms. She was too busy with other people to waste any time there on Juliet, whom she saw constantly at home.

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"No, I don't mean that," said Bertha. "It is about Miss Brown. Really, Juliet, you ought not to have brought her here!"

"And why not, I should like to know!" Juliet flared up at once, just as Bertha had been sure she would. "You asked for workers, and I have brought you a good one. Surely you have no fault to find with the quality of her work?"

"I don't know, for I haven't examined it. You know very well that isn't it. There is great objection to her being in that room, or in any of the surgical dressings rooms. She could work in the Sewing Room, perhaps, or she could do some knitting, but we have been especially asked to be very careful about whom we allow to make the dressings. Unless we know the women who come, they have got to give references. Can Miss Brown give any references?"

"Of course she can! She can give the Warings and the Clydes!"

"Don't be a goose, Juliet, if you can help it," said Bertha, who had no fear of Juliet nor of any one. "You know perfectly well that the Warings and the Clydes know absolutely nothing about Miss Brown beyond what they have seen

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of her since she came here, and also that I remember meeting her and her sister, who were then two German girls, in Brussels, which fact she flatly denies. If she were perfectly honest and to be trusted she would have told us she was there. You can't shake me in that, especially since I saw that identical sister going up to Miss Brown's room. Now, as Chairman of the Surgical Dressings Committee I have got to be very careful, and complaint has been made to me about allowing her in that room. I must pay some attention to it, or I shouldn't be doing my duty."

Juliet's sense of justice admitted this, angry though she was. She did not speak for a minute, and then she said, "Who made the complaint?"

"Miss Baxter, Miss Andrews, and Miss Snow."

"Oh, of course! I might have known without asking."

"But they are perfectly right about it, Juliet! You probably have no idea of how the feeling has spread about her in Clyde Corners. Nobody would have minded in the least if she hadn't tried to hide that she is German. There are lots of German-Americans whom every one likes and re-

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spects, and no one doubts their loyalty. They are doing splendid work for this country. I cannot understand how you, of all people, can stick it out the way you do about that girl. Well, I called you out so as to tell you first, but now I have got to go back to her at once and ask her to go into the Sewing Room to work, or else to leave the building. They think she ought not to be here at all, and perhaps they are right. She may give information, they say."

"Ridiculous nonsense!" exclaimed Juliet. "Those old cats! Miss Snow has always disliked me, ever since that old valentine affair at school, and so of course she would be against any one whom I consider my friend."

"Don't be a goose, Juliet," said Bertha again; "but if you can think of any way of getting the girl out of the building more pleasantly for her than if I were to go and request her to leave, I am willing to agree to it."

"I will go home myself," said Juliet rising. "She will probably offer to go with me of her own accord, as it was I who urged her to come with me. She had no idea of coming here until I met her. And when we get away from here

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I will tell her why—and I shall not come again myself.”

Bertha opened her lips to reply to this, and then on second thoughts decided to remain silent. She was learning self-control in doing war work. She knew too that eventually Juliet would recover from her wrath; that was one good thing about Juliet, thought Bertha—she never “kept it up long!”

But she did not know how much was about to take place that would have the effect of increasing her cousin's anger rather than to abate it. When Juliet returned to the room where she had left Frederica and Elizabeth, she found that the three seats opposite to them at the table were now occupied by the Misses Andrews, Snow and Baxter. They had come in from the large room as Bertha and Juliet left by the other door, and in perfect silence and with no greeting of any sort had seated themselves as though to do the work, but they had remained idle. Their faces were solemn, and they made no attempt to hide the fact that their purpose in sitting there was to watch Miss Brown.

Juliet stopped in the doorway. For a mo-

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ment she could not speak; her voice refused to come and the angry tears were in her eyes. Then she walked around the table, and bending down between her two friends she said in a whisper, "I find I must go home, Frederica. Don't you want to come with me?"

"Ah, yes, indeed!" exclaimed Frederica. Both she and Elizabeth thought from Juliet's face and manner that she had heard bad news of some kind from Mrs. Rufford, and both rose quickly.

"I will come too!" said Elizabeth.

"No, please don't, Elizabeth! It would be much better for you to stay. I will tell you later why I have to go, and why I want—at least, it is better for Frederica to come with me and not you."

"Has anything happened? Have you heard anything dreadful, Juliet? You look as if you had." They were now in the hall outside the room, where no one could hear them. "Why won't you let me come, too?"

"Nothing has happened—that is, not—not as you seem to think, but I must go home, and it is better that only Frederica should come with me. Do please go back, Elizabeth! Really it is bet-

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ter for you to stay here. I will explain it all to you later."

Elizabeth, much puzzled, returned to her seat. She felt hurt with Juliet, for why did she need Frederica and refuse to take her, who was certainly the older and the closer friend? But in a few minutes she understood. As soon as the girls were out of hearing the three ladies on the opposite side of the table had begun to talk, and they made no secret of their indignation until they remembered suddenly that Elizabeth Clyde had returned to her seat—Elizabeth, whose mother had been the means of bringing Miss Brown to Clyde Corners, and of keeping her there! With one accord the three, with a whispered word of reminder, rose and returned to the other room.

Juliet and Frederica walked slowly up Garland Street. The Red Cross building was in the lower part of the town beyond the railroad station, and their way led past the shops and through the business section of the place. Neither spoke for some minutes after they reached the street; Juliet was wondering what she should say to explain her sudden decision to leave, while Fred-

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erica felt a foreboding of the truth. She was sure that she knew the reason for their departure.

"I don't want to go home yet!" Juliet broke the silence abruptly. "I want to speak to you, Frederica. We are so near your house—may I go home with you and go up to your room to talk? It is important."

"Surely! I should be glad if you would."

Nothing more was said, and they walked quickly to the Inn. They met no one as they mounted the stairs, and presently they were behind the closed door of Frederica's room.

"What is it?" she asked quietly, as she turned to face her friend. "Is it about me?"

"Yes, it is! I feel so dreadfully about it, Frederica, I can hardly speak, for it is all my fault that you should have this happen. I persuaded you to go there, when you really didn't want to! It is all my fault, and I am so sorry! Do please forgive me!" Juliet's voice was unsteady and the tears were in her eyes. "If I could have done anything there I would, but I was afraid there would be an open fuss if I refused to do as they said I must, and it would be easier for you

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in the end if I just asked you to come out with me the way I did. Of course you don't know——” She paused, uncertain how to continue. She did not suppose for an instant that Frederica suspected the reason.

“That I am supposed to be a German?” Miss Brown asked calmly.

“Why, did you know before that people were saying so?” Juliet's surprise was intense.

“Naturally!”

“But has any one said so to you?”

“Not in so many words, perhaps, but from many hints and signs I have gathered that such was their opinion.”

Juliet was silent. If Frederica was English, as she had forced herself to believe in spite of all the gossip, why should it have occurred to the governess herself that she was thought to be German? What would suggest anything so far from the truth? Her own doubts returned to Juliet now with overwhelming force: the sister, the paper with German written on it, all the boarding-house tales about German letters having come to the Inn, and away back, her father's suspicion the first night they had ever seen Frederica. Then,

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later and above all, Bertha's certainty in regard to the German family she remembered having met in Brussels!

She stood looking at Frederica—neither had sat down as yet—and as she looked the conviction grew upon her that it was so. Frederica was a German. Frederica did not speak the truth. She had denied that she was ever in Brussels. What should she do about it? Juliet did not know what she should do, but even yet she did not allow herself wholly to doubt her friend's honor. It was only too true that Frederica had deceived them all, that she had actually said to them what was not true, but had she not been forced to it? She had come out to Clyde Corners because she was trying to earn an honest living, and to have proclaimed that she was German would have destroyed in all probability her only chance of doing so. It was indeed terrible to be deceived, thought Juliet, whose first experience in this was now upon her, but it was worse to be a disloyal friend. If she were to turn against Frederica, what would become of her? There was no doubt that the occurrence at the Red Cross rooms would soon become known in

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every corner of Clyde Corners, so quickly did gossip fly about in a small town, and especially as there were many people in the rooms when it happened.

Juliet decided instantly to stand by her and to help her in every way possible. That she had been deceived—that Frederica had not spoken the truth—these things she must face later when she was alone. She hoped that Frederica would now tell her of her own accord (for of course she would not ask her of her nationality and her reasons for hiding it), and they could then consult together without any fear of misunderstanding.

Frederica's first remark made her think that she was about to do so. "Let us sit down," she said, removing her hat and putting it away. "I wish to ask you what I had better do."

"You mean about telling people the truth?"

Frederica looked at her sharply. "The truth?" she said. "What is the truth?"

"I—I don't know!"

"Do you mean that *you* believe me to be German?"

"I—I don't know!" repeated Juliet. Then, "Frederica, I don't know what to believe, for you

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haven't told me. I shall believe anything you tell me yourself—at least, I shall try to! But before you say anything, I want to say this to you;" and her face changed as she spoke, growing both strong and tender in its expression. "I am going to stand by you, no matter what you may have to tell me. I am really and truly your friend, Frederica, and if you are in trouble, or there is going to be any trouble, I shall try to help you all I can. I want to say this to you before you explain anything, because, you know—well, you know I have theories about friendship! They may be foolish theories—no, I am sure they are not foolish, no matter what older people may think. What is the use of calling yourself a friend unless when there is any trouble, and you are puzzled about things, and can't understand at all, you are willing to go without understanding, and be just as good a friend as if you did? That is what I mean. You can tell me or not this afternoon what the real truth is, but perhaps you are held back by something I know nothing about. Perhaps it is simply impossible for you to explain to me to-day why you have had to hide things, and why you can't trust

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even me with your secret, and if it is that way—why, I just want you to know that it is all right! It doesn't make a bit of difference, Frederica. You don't have to tell me now if you would really rather not. But I will do anything that I can to help you, if you need any help. Just please remember that—and I mean it, whether you ever explain or not."

Frederica looked at her fully now, and straight into her eyes. She had not comprehended until now that such friendship could exist. She had never before experienced it, and even now she was unable to grasp all that it meant; but her heart was touched by it, and her understanding was for the moment awakened. She realized at least for an instant the nobility of Juliet's character. She started forward in her chair, and putting out her hand, she touched her friend's knee. She seemed to be about to speak, but before the words could come, there was a knock upon the door. Juliet felt sure afterward that if they had not been interrupted, Frederica would have told her then.

CHAPTER XVIII

RUMORS

IT was Mrs. Lovejoy who knocked, the proprietor of the Clyde Corners Inn. She was evidently nervous, for her manner was agitated. She was a person who had passed the greater part of her life in trying to please and make comfortable all those who sojourned beneath her roof, and the lines in her face showed that it had been no easy matter. In the present instance she was much disturbed by the task that lay before her, but what else could she do? Had there not been a meeting of her other boarders in her parlor immediately after luncheon? It had been the unanimous opinion of that meeting that "something must be done." Those boarders had been with her for years, and therefore she was now about to do that "something"!

"I should like to speak to you, Miss Brown," she said, in her usual vaguely hesitating manner. "May I come in? Oh, I didn't know you had a

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visitor! Perhaps, Miss Brown, you would prefer to have me wait until you are—er—until you are alone?”

“Just as you wish, Mrs. Lovejoy. It makes no difference to me,” replied Frederica. She guessed the landlady’s errand.

“Then I will tell you now. I—that is—there is some one who would like this room—who has offered me a good price for it, and—times are hard, you know, and the price of food going up as it is doing, and—and—I shall be obliged—that is, I shall have to ask you——”

“Yes?” said Miss Brown, as she paused, “you will have to ask me——?”

“To—er—to give up this room. To leave.”

“And suppose that I am willing to pay that higher price? As I am already occupying this room, and have paid for it each week with unfailing regularity, it would seem as though I had the right to consider the proposition before being turned out. What is the price of the room to be now?”

“I am sorry, Miss Brown, but that wouldn’t do at all! The ladies—at least, I——”

“Ah!” interrupted Frederica, “the ladies’! I

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thought so! Very well, then, Mrs. Lovejoy, you wish me to leave—and when?”

“It is customary of course to give a week’s notice on either side, but if you could make it convenient to find new quarters before then, it would suit—that is——”

“Certainly, I will do so. A week would be much too long. Thank you, Mrs. Lovejoy. And is that all?”

“Yes, that is all. I—I am sorry——” She murmured something and left the room, thankful that the painful interview was over.

Frederica watched Mrs. Lovejoy go down the stairs; then she closed the door and turned to Juliet. “What had I better do now?” she asked. “No one in Clyde Corners will take me in after this.”

“Oh, my dear!” exclaimed Juliet. “It is too dreadful! I wish you could get away from here this very night! I can’t bear to have you in the same house with those old cats another minute! I am going to do something about it.”

“There is nothing to be done,” said Frederica quietly, as she sat down and looked about her. “I am sorry, for I like this little room, although I

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have been tortured at the meals. The room has been a kind of a home. There is nothing to be done."

"Yes, there is! There must be!" exclaimed Juliet hotly. "Do you suppose I am just going to sit down and allow you to be turned out? I am going to get you away from here to-night. You are not to stay here another minute. I will go right out about it now, and while I am gone you had better be packing, so as to be ready to move out before dinner. It is outrageous treatment!"

In her haste and excitement it did not then occur to her that Frederica had made no direct reply to the hint given by Mrs. Lovejoy; she had not asked her why "the ladies" had decided that she must leave. Neither had she offered to Juliet any explanation, but Juliet did not remember this in her anxiety to help her friend in this new trouble that had come upon her. She ran down the stairs, for there was not a moment to be lost. She did not turn toward her own home, but up the hill. She must see Mrs. Clyde at once. Oh, if only she could find her at home!

And then she remembered that Mrs. Clyde was

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not at home. She had been spending the week in Boston, and was to return on Monday. Juliet stopped short as she thought of this, and then instantly continued her rapid walk up the hill. She did not know what to do now, but of one thing she was certain: she must in some way settle the matter before she herself went home. That poor homeless girl must be given a night's shelter somewhere. She only wished that she could take Frederica back with her, but that was out of the question; her father and mother were also away and she knew her father would be seriously displeased if she undertook to do that when she was alone. She decided to go to Cyntra and ask her advice. Perhaps—oh, if only she would!—Cyntra would offer to have Frederica come there!

Juliet found her sister in the living-room with her work. Jim had not yet returned from New York, but was due at any minute. Cyntra looked up with a smile of welcome.

"I hope you have come to dinner," she said.

"Take off your things and tell me everything that has been happening since we last met!"

"Something has been happening, and I have

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come to ask your advice, Cyntra! I can't stay to dinner." Juliet did not sit down, but stood in front of her sister. Her eyes shone with indignation, and her cheeks were crimson. She spoke quickly, the words fairly tumbling over one another in her rapid speech. "The most awful thing has happened! I took Frederica Brown to the Red Cross this afternoon—you know how they have been asking us all to bring in more workers, and what a beautiful worker she is—and Bertha came to me and asked me to go out with her a minute into the other room, and then she made me go back and get Frederica and take her away from the building! Those hateful people on the Committee have made up their minds that she is a German spy, and Bertha said she had to do as they said because they had passed a vote about it. Oh, how *could* Bertha agree to doing it? And I had to do as she said, although I was furious with Bertha, and I got her home, and while I was there talking with her, who should come up to her room but Mrs. Lovejoy, and she told her that the other boarders objected to her being there, and she would please give up the room as soon as she could! I don't think she ought to

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have to stay there another night, for it will be so awfully uncomfortable for her, and I told her to pack her things and I would find a place for her to go to to-night. You see I was going right to Mrs. Clyde about it, and then when I got outside I remembered that Mrs. Clyde is away and won't be home until to-morrow! Of course I am perfectly sure she will have her come there to stay, for she thinks everything of Frederica I know, but in the meantime, what had we better do? Would it be all right for me to ask Elizabeth to let her come there before her mother gets back? I am sure she would be only too glad to do it, but with Mrs. Clyde away, I don't know whether we two girls ought to do it. You see I can't ask her to our house on account of father and mother being away. They have gone to Aunt Mildred's to dine and stay all night. If it were any one else but Frederica—but you know father doesn't like her very much. It is so queer of father to feel as he does about her! He isn't usually so unreasonable. But I don't like to take advantage of his being away, so I haven't asked her to come to our house. Now, Cyntra, could

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you—do you think Jimmie would mind if you had her here just for this one night?”

Cyntra considered for a minute before she replied. She knew how strong the feeling was in Clyde Corners in regard to Miss Brown, and she knew that their own family, because of Bertha's persistent conviction that she had been one of the German family in Brussels, now felt that there was something about her that required explanation. She knew that her father did not like Juliet's devotion to her. At the same time, Cyntra felt very sorry for the girl. Her heart was drawn to her because, like herself, she had come there from another country, whatever that country was—but unlike herself, she had not come to a kind and loving family. Cyntra had crossed the ocean not knowing whom or what she should find at her journey's end. She had dreaded that end with an indescribable and never-to-be-forgotten misery, and then to her surprise and relief she had found a charming and devoted father, and a stepmother who had almost immediately become equally dear to her, and a brother and sisters whom she loved. She had found the man whom she had since mar-

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ried, hosts of friends, and a happy and comfortable home.

Should she now refuse to receive into that home for one night only, a girl who had found none of these things, but who was also far from the land of her birth? She looked up at Juliet, still standing in front of her.

"If Jimmie doesn't object," she said, "and I hardly think he will, you can ask her to come here for the night. There he is now!"

Jimmie, just home from New York, came in and joined the council. He did not object, but he made one condition. "We must be very careful," said he, "as long as there are all those rumors flying about, not to say a word about the war or any public question while she is in the house. There has been another submarine horror, and every one believes war will be declared very soon. There are crowds around the bulletin boards in town, and you can feel in the air how intensely strong the determination is to throw ourselves into it with all our might. There is no demonstration, but just intense, quiet determination."

When Juliet had left the house he turned to his wife. "Of course I shall go, Cyntra."

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"Of course!" she answered. "I have never considered any other possibility."

When Juliet reached the Inn she went directly up to Frederica's room and knocked upon the door, which was opened to her immediately.

"It is all right!" she said, when she was inside, and the door closed that no one might hear. "You are—that is—Cyntra hopes you will come up to her house and spend the night. I knew she would be glad to have you—at least I hoped she would—and she is, and you must go right away. Are you all ready?" She looked about her. "Why, you haven't done a thing to get ready! You haven't packed anything, have you?"

"How could I?" asked Frederica; "I didn't believe for an instant that any one would be willing to take me in. Are you quite sure about your sister? Did you have to urge her very much?"

"No, I didn't!" exclaimed Juliet. "I simply told her what had happened, and she said almost right away that you must come there, and her husband came home and he is perfectly willing, too."

"I can scarcely believe it!" said Frederica slowly. "Your sister—why, your sister is English!"

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"What of that?"

"But the English——" She stopped suddenly. Then, "And she is so intimate with Mrs. Rufford, and it was she——"

"And what of that? In our family we don't always agree! We don't think exactly alike about lots of things, but it doesn't make any difference if we don't, for we are all just as fond of each other! Nickie and Bertha very often think entirely differently from Cyntra and Jim, but they are all just as good friends. And as for Cyntra and me, why we often don't agree! She thinks I am dreadfully stubborn, I know, but we love each other as much as two sisters possibly could, even though we are only half sisters. Oh, you needn't worry about Bertha! Cyntra wants you to come there to stay all night, and that is all there is to it. Mrs. Clyde is to get home to-morrow, and then things can be straightened out. Pack your bag for the night, and lock up everything else, and lock your room and take the key with you, for you surely have a right to it for another week."

Frederica decided to follow her friend's advice. A little later, after telling one of the maids that she would be away over night, she left the house

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with Juliet. Miss Baxter and Miss Andrews, from their station opposite the wide doors of the parlor, saw the two girls go out together, and they looked at each other and held up their hands.

Juliet, having left Frederica with her sister, went home. She declined Cyntra's invitation to stay and dine, for she had been left in charge of the household when Mr. and Mrs. Waring went to New York, and she was anxious, too, to get home that she might think things over. Events that afternoon had crowded thick and fast. She hoped that the younger children would be too much occupied with their lessons to notice that she had disturbing matters on her mind.

At the supper table she made a determined effort to be cheerful and entertaining, but she was conscious that Mildred's gaze was frequently turned upon her, and that George's eyes were also fixed upon her with a penetrating stare. It was evident that the children had something to tell, and were now engaged in the process of discovering if she already knew it. Was it possible that they had already heard of the incident which had occurred at the Red Cross rooms?

She had not long to wait. As soon as Mildred

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had satisfied the first pangs of hunger, she announced her news. "There's been a great old time, to-day," said she. "Have you heard about it, Ju?"

"It depends upon what it was."

"Well, it was about your dearly beloved Frederica."

"It would be more proper to speak of her as 'Miss Brown,' Mildred, you being a mere chit!"

"Never was proper, and never want to be! As for the 'chit' part, I am just the same age you were when Cyntra came from England, and you didn't consider yourself any chit then. You ordered George and me around like everything, didn't she, George?"

Juliet had to laugh, although she was worried. "I suppose I did! Then, instead of calling you a mere chit, I'll address you as a dear suffering darling, but will at the same time recommend most humbly that you speak of your friend's governess as 'Miss Brown.' It would be slightly more respectful."

"I don't see why Mildred should be respectful to her," put in George, coming to the rescue of his youngest sister so unexpectedly that Mildred

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turned and beamed her gratitude. "Why," he continued, "should she be respectful to a spy?"

"George!"

"Oh, you needn't be so horrified!" said Mildred, taking up the story again. "George and I decided long ago that she was a spy, and now everybody knows she is one. She was led out of the Red Cross rooms this afternoon by Chief of Police Murphy and Mr. Callahan, that nice policeman, and is spending the night in our jail."

"Then your own sister—why, how perfectly ridiculous and outrageous! Where did you hear such a preposterous story as that?"

"Down town. I went to get an ice cream cone at Fluke's—they have the best there—and Beatrice Shaw came in to get one too, and she had just been talking with Amy Davis, and Amy's mother was at the Red Cross rooms when it happened. Amy heard her mother telling somebody all about it, and how Miss Brown was taken away by force, so of course Amy and Beatrice knew it was the policemen, and of course if it was the policemen, Miss Brown must be in prison, so there you are!"

"There you are, indeed!" exclaimed Juliet, scornfully. "Not a word of it is true, except that

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she was asked to leave the Red Cross rooms. If there was a policeman, I am he, myself, for I was the one who went out with her when Bertha asked me to. The Committee were afraid to have her there among the surgical supplies. Of course it was nonsense, but I had to do it, rather than have a fuss. There was no force used. We went out just as quietly as I would have done if I had been alone. As for the jail, she is spending the night at Cyntra's. Do you call that being in prison? The first thing you do after supper, Mildred, is to call up your two friends, Beatrice Shaw and Amy Davis, on the telephone, and explain to them the real situation. If you don't do it, I will myself. The idea of such a tale being invented and set going within an hour after the real thing happened! It makes me ashamed of Clyde Corners!"

CHAPTER XIX

GONE!

FOR a few minutes nothing more on the subject was said at the table. The maid came in with a plate of hot toast, and while she was there Juliet tried to speak naturally about something else but with little success. When she left the room, George addressed his sisters. He placed butter on his toast with a lavish hand, while at the same time he tried to speak with the dignity that befitted his position. He was sitting in his father's place, and was therefore opposite to Juliet.

"That's all very well," said he; "p'r'aps those girls did get things mixed up a little this afternoon, but Mildred and the Clydes didn't get mixed up about what they saw and what they heard when they dressed up that time and went to the Farrington house."

"No, indeed!" chimed in Mildred, again encouraged by the support of her brother.

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"What they saw, you mean. They didn't hear anything. Of course I know they thought they saw her up there, but they didn't talk with her."

"It was more than seeing," said George. "They heard something."

"Indeed we did!" said Mildred, "only we have never told you. I told George. He's the only one who knows about it, except Dot and Lucy and me."

"Are you going to tell me now?" asked Juliet, feeling as if she could not bear much more.

Mildred looked at George.

"Yes, I think you had better," was his unspoken reply, conveyed by a glance of the eyes and a nod of the head, and Mildred obeyed.

"There were Germans up there—some German men. You know two men came out into the hall while we were waiting. They looked exactly like the kind of men we used to see on Third Avenue when we lived in the apartment down Lexington Avenue, and they were talking German in the room all the time we were there. I heard them very distinctly."

Juliet was perfectly silent. In a few minutes she pushed back her chair and left the room.

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Presently she came back. "It is all dreadful," she said, "and I am very much worried by what you have just told me. I've got to think over what to do. I suppose I ought not to have gone to Cyntra, but now she is there, we can't help it. I do wish father and mother were at home! Mildred, I think perhaps I had better telephone those girls myself and tell them the true story about this afternoon, and then if you don't mind I will go upstairs and think it out. Please forgive me for being so cross, Mildred darling! I know I was, and I am so sorry!"

Mildred left the table and went across the room to her sister with a rush. She threw her arms around her and gave her a smothering hug. "You dear old darling!" she whispered. "You weren't a bit cross! You're just perfect!"

"Not very perfect!" whispered Juliet as she kissed her. "Awfully imperfect, especially now! Goodnight, Georgie dear. You will look after locking up the house, won't you?"

"Of course. And see here, Ju! I wouldn't worry if I were you. Maybe she's all right, and if she isn't, we'll fix it up. I'll tell father what I

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know from Mildred, and we'll straighten things out. Don't you girls worry!"

"No, darling, I'll try not to, thank you! Good-night!" Even in her distress, Juliet had to smile at the thought of her small brother George engaged in coping with German spies, but she was careful that he did not see her.

As soon as she had gone, Mildred turned to her brother. "She said she was going to her room to think it out, but she didn't mean just that."

"What did she mean?"

"She meant she was going to say her prayers," said Mildred impressively, as she drew nearer and lowered her voice. "Juliet is fearfully religious. She doesn't speak of it, but I know it. I happen to know that she never forgets to say her prayers every morning and every night, and that's wonderful, for I do forget mine sometimes, although I mean not to. I guess you forget sometimes yourself, George!"

George looked conscious; then he remarked: "That is neither here nor there. You'd better attend to remembering your own, Miss Mildred! Just pass me that cake plate, will you? I may as well finish up what's there."

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Juliet came down to breakfast the next morning still uncertain what to do, but with a serenity of expression that was not lost upon her brother and sister. They were already at the table when she joined them. Mildred immediately opened the subject that was uppermost in the minds of them all.

"Well," she said, "you look as if you had decided something! What are you going to do?"

"I am going up to see Elizabeth as soon as I can. I am so glad it is Saturday."

"And what are you going to do about Miss Brown?"

"I don't know," replied Juliet slowly, "and if you don't mind, I would rather not talk about it now, Mildred dear. There is nothing actually to be done until Mrs. Clyde gets home, and she is expected this afternoon."

"Oh, dear, I had hoped there would be something doing this morning!" sighed Mildred. "I am simply crazy to appear as a witness, and I have been hoping they would call me. I thought it very likely they would at least make me go on to Washington to tell the President about those men."

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Although she did not feel especially merry, Juliet could not help laughing at this. She knew that Mildred did not wholly mean it, but it was evident that she hoped to be given attention somewhere.

"You had better make up your mind to tell it only to the family, my dear child! Please be very careful not to say anything to any one else. It is probably not nearly as important as you seem to think."

"Oh, that's all very well for you to say, but I think they will be glad to know it, and it is a great bother to have you tell me I must not say anything to any one but the family. Well, I shall go up and see Dot and Lucy—I can certainly talk to them about it all I want to—so I will go along with you now. Perhaps you and Elizabeth would like to hear again about those men, and at any rate, I must see the girls. They may know something more."

But Mildred learned nothing new from her friends, who were as ignorant and also as excited about it as she was. Elizabeth and Juliet, behind closed doors, were, as they knew, engaged in earnest conversation, which ceased immediately when

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Lucy on some pretext entered the room. She was promptly invited to withdraw, and for the space of two minutes was deeply offended; then the three younger girls all laughed, and went out of doors. "Of course they are talking about Miss Brown," said they. "We know that very well, but it would be such fun to hear what they are saying!"

"I thought you would never get here, Juliet," said Elizabeth, when her friend entered her room. "Before you say a word yourself, I want to tell you what I have done."

"But wait, Elizabeth! Before *you* say a word, I must ask you if you know what happened yesterday at the Red Cross rooms?"

"Yes, I do! Miss Andrews and Miss Baxter and Miss Snow came here last evening to see Mamma about it, and when they found that she was away they asked for me. They told me all about it, and they said Mrs. Lovejoy had ordered Frederica to leave the Inn! They said you were with her, and had taken her off to spend the night. I didn't call you up, for I thought you would surely telephone me, Juliet! Why didn't you?"

"I just couldn't do it! I was terribly upset, Elizabeth, for it was all so dreadful, and besides, I

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didn't want to say anything more than I could help on the telephone. There is gossip enough already. I thought it would be better to wait and talk to you this morning. I wonder if Frederica has left Cyntra's yet, and what she is going to do now."

"She is here in the house, and that is just what I want to tell you. I had the car, and went down there. She had just got back from your sister's, for she left there right after breakfast. She didn't seem to know what to do, and I think she was going to New York. When I asked her to come here for over Sunday, she seemed tremendously relieved."

"You have asked her to stay here? What will your mother say?"

"I should think she would think it all right, for she thinks so highly of Frederica, and won't listen to a word against her. You see she is so wonderful with the accounts, and Mamma's letters, and the children, and everything! But let me tell you! I had a letter from Mamma this morning saying that she was not coming home until Monday! It came just as I was starting to go down and get Frederica. I only meant then to bring her up for

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the day, but when I read Mamma's letter, I decided to ask her to stay till Monday. There didn't seem to be anything else to do, but as soon as I had asked her and she said she would come, I got frightened, and while she was packing I went to the telegraph office and telegraphed Mamma to come home sooner if she possibly could! I suppose I was a goose, but I really am worried. Do you think I was very foolish, Juliet?"

"No, I don't! I'm glad you did send for her. I am almost sorry you invited Frederica here. I rather wish you had asked some older person's advice before you did it."

At this Elizabeth could not hold back her tears. She was uncertain herself as to the wisdom of her action, and as she had had a trying winter with her lame knee, her nerves were tired. To receive objections when she had expected praise was almost more than she could bear.

"There was no one I could ask," she sobbed, "for you know how Mamma hates to have any one interfere with her affairs. She n-never asks any one's advice, except her business man in town, about st-stocks and th-things. Of course she wouldn't ask him about Frederica, and she has

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said over and over again that she wouldn't give Fr-Frederica up, no m-matter what people said, be-because she is so v-valuable. I couldn't c-con-sult any older p-person!"

"I know, Elizabeth dear! Don't cry so! You don't want her to see that you've been crying. I understand how you feel, dear! I do hope your mother will come home sooner than Monday! What did you say in the telegram?"

"I just said, 'Please come Sunday. All well, but need you for important matter.'"

"That was just right, and I am glad you did it. And now let us go out. We will go see some of the girls, or something. It is so beautiful out, and—and—it is awfully queer, Elizabeth, and I am horribly ashamed of the feeling, but do you know, I don't want to meet her quite yet. I have been so truly fond of her, and I am still—there has always been something about her that appealed to me, but something Mildred told me last night, and all these other things that have been suspected and now seem to be true—Bertha remembering her in Brussels and she denying it—it seems to me now as if she had been pretending all the time. Mildred says they were Germans whom

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she was with up at the Farrington house." And she told the story to Elizabeth that she had heard the night before. "Oh, come," she said when she had finished, "let's go out! I want to get into the fresh air!"

Frederica, at work in her little office room, the window of which overlooked the drive, heard the front door close and saw the two girls who from the first had been her friends, walking toward the gate. Juliet as usual held her tall figure erect and straight, and she was evidently talking, for she turned her face constantly toward Elizabeth. She, shorter, and slighter than her companion, still limped a little and carried a cane, but she was not using it for she had taken Juliet's arm. Frederica sighed as she watched them go. Then she left the window, and going back to the typewriter, she inserted a fresh sheet of paper and began to write.

Juliet and Elizabeth, finding the friend at home whom they went to see, were easily persuaded to stay to luncheon. Elizabeth telephoned to her home to explain to Miss Brown that she would not be there, which was not unusual, for the governess was often alone at luncheon, and was told by the

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maid who answered the telephone that Miss Brown was not in the house.

"Oh, I suppose she has gone to the Inn to get her things and pack her trunk. She is coming back, Margaret, to stay over Sunday with us, you know. I told Catherine this morning to get a room ready for her." Elizabeth then went back to her friends.

They passed the greater part of the afternoon together, and they had such a good time that Elizabeth forgot the troubles at home, but Juliet, although she tried to be as merry as the others were, was conscious all the time of something underneath—a sense of grief and disappointment. It was her first experience in finding that she had been mistaken in one whom she had trusted, and to Juliet Waring this experience would naturally prove bitter. She had really known for weeks that there was reason to doubt Frederica, but her loyal nature had fought against accepting this truth until it should be proved to her beyond a doubt; and now the scales had fallen from her eyes. Mildred's account of the Germans whom Frederica had been visiting in secret was unmistakable proof

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that she was deceiving them, and Juliet could no longer hold out against this fact.

And having at last acknowledged it to herself, it was hard for her to forgive Frederica. She did not wish to see her again, and all day she struggled with this feeling. It would not be necessary for her to meet her until the next day, and she hoped that by then she would feel more kindly toward the girl for whom until now she had cared so deeply.

Elizabeth reached home at about five o'clock, and found a telegram from her mother saying that she would arrive that night, and that Tony and Mark Holbrook were coming with her. This news was so welcome that for a few moments her only thought was that now her cares and responsibilities were at an end; her mother would be there and could decide for herself what should be done, while Mark, wise, wonderful, charming Mark, would help them all with his advice and—but what would his advice be? She came to a sudden pause in her pleasant reflections. Mark, in his great wisdom, had maintained from the first that the governess was not wholly to be trusted—and he had been right! She was pleased beyond measure that he

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had been proved to be right, and she had no doubt that this was always the case; but she was alarmed by the thought of what it would mean to have him under the same roof for at least two days with the young woman whom every one now considered a German spy. Elizabeth's cares returned and settled upon her more heavily than before. The plot thickened, and she saw no way of escape from its complications.

She decided that the first thing to do was to tell Miss Brown of the message from Mrs. Clyde, for it was only fair to give her due warning of who her fellow guest was to be, but when she went to the room that the governess was to have the door stood wide open and no one was within; neither did the room show any sign of having been occupied.

"How very odd!" thought Elizabeth. "Perhaps they misunderstood, and she is in one of the other rooms."

But although she looked in every room in the house, including her mother's and her own, the governess was not to be found; neither was she in her little office, nor in any of the downstairs rooms. The maids reported that they had not

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seen her all day, for at lunch time she had telephoned that she was detained at the Inn, and would not return to the house until later. Dorothy and Lucy had been spending the day with friends, so they had not seen her, nor did they know anything about her.

Elizabeth was uncertain as to what she had better do next. Her chief feeling was one of satisfaction; perhaps after all the guest would not be there when Mrs. Clyde and the boys arrived! But she must try to find her before they came. The car had gone to New York to meet them, but their train was not due there until six o'clock, and there was still plenty of time to look for Frederica at the Inn and bring her home before Mrs. Clyde should come. Elizabeth left the house at once, and as quickly as her lame knee would allow, she hurried down the hill to the Clyde Corners Inn. When the door was opened to her and she asked for Miss Brown, she was told that Miss Brown had gone.

"She's moved away," said the maid, who had recently come there, and did not know Elizabeth.

"Moved away! Where has she gone?"

"To New York, I think," replied the maid, "but nobody knows for sure. There's strange stories

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about, and we're all glad enough—but mebbe it's a friend of hers I'm talking to!"

"My name is Elizabeth Clyde—but if you are quite sure she has gone away—are you perfectly sure?"

"I only know I'm after cleaning the room and fixing it up for a gentleman who's to get here to dinner."

"Oh!" said Elizabeth. "Thank you." And she turned away.

So Frederica had really gone! She would have liked to go to the Warings' to tell Juliet, but by this time she was tired, and her knee was painful; she was obliged to go directly home, and she walked slowly and carefully. On the way she decided to say nothing to Juliet until the next day, for it was not worth while to worry her that night with the news that Frederica had left them without a word. Of course she must have returned to her family and friends. There would be no possibility of helping her any more; she would now become a thorough German, if she was not one already.

CHAPTER XX

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JULIET in the meantime had also gone home. She found that her father and mother had returned from their little visit in New York, and she had just given them an account of all that had transpired during their absence when there was heard a sharp ring at the doorbell. A telegram, addressed to Juliet, was handed in. She tore it open, and this was what she read: "If possible please forgive. Look behind ancestor's portrait. Farewell." It was signed "F. B." and it had been sent from Jersey City. What could it mean? Had she gone?

Mr. Waring advised Juliet to take it to the Clydes at once. "They ought to hear the news as soon as possible," said he, "although she may have telegraphed to them too. What can she mean by 'ancestor's portrait'?"

"There is one over the library mantelpiece of the Clydes' great-grandfather, the one who fought

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in the Revolution. Tony is always laughing at his mother about it, because she thinks so much of it, but I can't imagine what it has to do with Frederica."

"It is just a characteristic touch," replied her father. "She always suggested melodrama to me. I shouldn't wonder if you found a letter or some message there. Why couldn't she have left it where you could get it more easily? A mere letter-carrier might have served the purpose, and at the same time have saved her the expense of a telegram."

After Juliet had hastily left the house, he said to his wife: "I sincerely hope that girl has really gone and that she will never come back! She would do more harm to Juliet if she were here than she possibly can do to the country if she has gone back to her German friends."

Mrs. Waring smiled; then she laughed openly. "You needn't worry about Juliet," she said, "and you know it, George, as well as I do."

He laughed also. "Yes, you are right, Pauline! You usually are!"

"But I can't help being a little sorry for the girl," she added, "for I think she is more weak

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than wicked. She seems to have good impulses, but is influenced by any one she happens to be with."

"I never trusted her, but I will withhold my final judgment until I hear what the ancestor discloses!"

Juliet rushed into the Clydes' house, having run almost the entire way. Breathless, she entered the library, holding up the telegram for Elizabeth to see, and then came to a sudden halt just inside of the door. The room seemed to be full of people. She looked from one to the other, and then to her surprise, Tony Clyde stepped forward and greeted her with eagerness. How glad she was to see him! She had never before felt so happy at seeing Tony. He was so full of quiet strength, so cheerful, so ready to help her when he could! She returned his greeting with all the relief that she felt showing in her expressive face, and Tony saw it, and was made happier than he had been since he left Clyde Corners at Christmas time.

She turned to Mrs. Clyde, and then—was it Holbrook who was there, too? She shook hands with him also, and then turned hastily to Elizabeth with the telegram.

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"Oh, Juliet," exclaimed Mrs. Clyde, "what a time you have all had! We think Miss Brown has really gone! She has actually run away! That shows what she really is, doesn't it? I am only too thankful that she has, for I should have had to get rid of her, after all that has happened. Of course I couldn't possibly have kept her here any longer. Every one thinks that war will be declared very soon, and it would never have done to have her living here in the house. No one else would have taken her in, and we should have been watched by Secret Service people, and I don't know what all. It would have been very awkward and disagreeable. I am thankful she has saved me the trouble of telling her to go."

"Did you know she had gone, Juliet?" asked Elizabeth, who had been watching her friend's face.

"Yes, I thought so, for I have had a telegram from her."

"A telegram?" they all exclaimed.

She gave it to Tony, who was still standing beside her, and he read it aloud.

"Great Scott!" he said, laughing, "if she hasn't dragged into the mess our old original Tony!"

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He held up the telegram and waved it at the portrait. "Old Tony, what are you hiding from us?" he declaimed, in the voice of an orator. "To think of you, you old worthy, being used as a hiding-place for German propaganda!"

"Let's find out what she really means by it," said Mark quietly; and he walked to the mantel-piece and felt behind the picture-frame. In a moment he drew out a paper. It bore no address, it was typewritten, and it was not signed. It had evidently been recently written and folded. He handed it to Juliet.

"It must be for you," he said.

"It must be for all," was her reply, almost in a whisper. "I can't read it aloud. Will you do it, please?"

So Mark read it. "I am going," it began. "It is better for me to do so before Mrs. Clyde returns, to spare her the trouble of dismissing me. I feel sure that she would not wish me to stay when she learns the truth, for it is the truth that I am a German, and that I have tried to hide it from you. I shall never forget your kindness. It has won my eternal gratitude. Will you have the goodness to convey to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Waring



So Mark read it.

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my thanks and appreciation? Because of their hospitality last night, I was saved much discomfort. I did not know until then that an Englishwoman, since the war broke out, could be so kind and courteous to one supposed to be a German!

"And now Elizabeth has asked me to stay in this house until Monday! I thank you, Elizabeth. And then there is Juliet, who has been my friend from the first moment that I set foot in Clyde Corners. She has trusted me. She has stood by me, and has done for me all that was in her power. She went home with me from the Red Cross rooms, and it was through her that I was invited to pass the night in her sister's home. She has ever proved herself my friend, and I—I have deceived her! It will be impossible for her to forgive me, for I know she is one who loves truth. To me deceit seems sometimes necessary, for I have been taught by those who know better than I do that one cannot always reveal to others all that one knows oneself. For that reason the night I spent in her house, when I first visited Clyde Corners, I hid from her and her family the fact that I was a German, and I altered slightly the spelling of my name. To me it seems of minor importance to change two letters

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of the alphabet. Also, the evening when I was so kindly included in the family dinner-party, and I was asked by Mrs. Rufford if I had ever been in Brussels, I replied that I had not. This was not true. I was there at the time mentioned. I did it for a purpose—to keep the position which I had gained by which I could support myself, and thus leave my sister and my brother-in-law. He is a spy. I do not wish to be a spy, and now do I wish it less than I ever did, because you Americans have all been kind to me—because Juliet has trusted me until even she could trust no longer. For those reasons, I am planning to leave not only this house and you, but to go away from my own people and my former friends, to a place in this country but far away in the west where I am acquainted with a lady who I think will help me to gain a position. I have saved a little money, which I think will pay my passage. I will try to support myself in this way. I shall try to avoid seeing my sister before I go, that I may not be persuaded to remain.

“And before going, as some slight return for your kindness to me, I would say this: A certain house, that has the appearance of being closed, is

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used frequently at night. It should be examined. There is an upper room—I can say no more. Unless you do this, there is a certain house on Long Island which with its owners may suffer. Believe me, I should never have disclosed this secret were it not for the manner in which I have been treated by Juliet, and by her sister who was born in England, and by that sister's husband, whose father is the object of the special enmity of my brother-in-law and his friends. You will never see me or hear from me again. Farewell!"

Mark had stood beneath the portrait as he read the letter; the others were seated, Juliet near the door. When his voice ceased, she rose from her chair; she tried to speak, but she could not, and with a gesture she left the room. Tony followed her into the hall.

"I must go home, Tony!" she whispered. "It seems so sad and dreadful. You tell them, will you, that I have gone home?"

"I will when I come back," he said calmly, as he picked up his hat. "Of course I am going to walk down with you."

The three persons in the library heard the door close as they went out.

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"Poor Juliet!" said Elizabeth. "She is awfully cut up about it. She would naturally feel it more than any one, for she cared a good deal for Frederica."

"Please never let me hear you speak of her again as 'Frederica,' Elizabeth," said her mother sharply. Mrs. Clyde was now throwing all her energies into war work, and was naturally full of indignation. "Fancy our having had the near relative of a German spy right in our very midst! Mark, I am so glad you came home with us, even if it is only for two nights, for you can do something right away about it. You told me to-night that you never trusted her. I only wish I had known it before. Why didn't you speak to me about it when you were here at Christmas time? Now what had we better do first?"

"I suppose we should notify the town authorities about that house," said he; "but it was pretty fine of her, after all, to leave that letter, Mrs. Clyde, don't you think? She might so easily have gone off without saying anything."

"And pretty fine of her too to go away from her own people and go out west all alone," added Elizabeth.

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"Now, children," began Mrs. Clyde impatiently, "don't let us waste our time bringing up all her good points! Of course she had them, or she would never have been here. She was so efficient! A regular German for thoroughness—I might have guessed it if I hadn't had so much else to think about. But it is really our duty now as Americans to tell the police about that house. Mark, there is no knowing when Tony will come home as he has gone with Juliet, so will you go right down to the police station and tell them, and say that I sent you? If you meet Tony take him with you."

But he did not meet him, and he attended to the matter alone. He described the children's visit to the Farrington house, which Elizabeth had told of before Juliet came with the telegram, and he gave the officers both the telegram and the typewritten paper. He went up to the Palisades that evening with several of the men, but they found no sign of life. The policemen remained to watch all night, and the next morning they entered the house and examined it from cellar to attic. They found on the upper floor many boxes and packages containing documents, and other things such as

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platinum, and cotton; and there were various parts of machinery—one bit in particular which was new to them. From the memoranda it was discovered later that this was called an arson machine, so constructed that it would set fire to a building and leave no trace of the fire's origin, and it was to have been used to destroy the house of Cyntra's father-in-law on Long Island. Although a careful watch of the Farrington house was continued for some time, no one visited it again. It was supposed that its owner had received a warning, but whether from Frederica Brown herself or in some other way, was never known. Mildred and her two friends were called upon to inform the police personally of what they had seen, and to describe the two men, all of which they thoroughly enjoyed, and they were neither abashed nor disturbed by their sudden importance. On the contrary, it was a great moment for the three.

When Tony and Juliet left the Clydes' house that Saturday evening, they walked for a few minutes in silence. Juliet was glad that he had come with her. She had always felt that Tony understood, even when he did not say anything. He was

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often quiet with her, and she with him. At last she said, in a voice that was not like her own for she was trying not to cry: "Tony, it makes me feel as if I could never trust any one again! I believed in her until—oh, until a very short time ago! I really and truly did, and I liked her, and it might be the same with other people—I mean about trusting them too much. I am afraid now—I—I don't want ever to have to go through with it again—so—so it is perhaps better not to be so much of a friend again to anybody."

"That's awfully foolish, Juliet," said he, "and you know it is! You will get over that. You know very well that there have always been several kinds of people in the world, and so far as we can see there always will be. You may run up against the same thing again, and you may not, but as for doubting everybody because of your experience with one person—nonsense, Juliet! It's a bad waste of good time for us to argue about that, and I'm not going to do it. How about me? Don't you trust me?"

"Yes, I think I do, Tony!" Her voice trembled, and he could not decide whether she was laughing or crying. He stooped down to peer under the

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brim of her hat. Tall though she was, he had to bend to look into her face.

"Well, you had better, Juliet—and you may as well remember too that you and I aren't the only two people in the world who can be trusted. There are a few more! But I want to tell you that I came home with mother for a special reason. She probably thinks that it was just for fun, but it wasn't—not by a long shot! I wanted to see you—just you. I——"

"Oh, Tony," she interrupted, "please wait!" She guessed what he meant, but she felt that it would be impossible to let him speak to her now. "I can't talk to-night. I—I am so tired. Please wait until to-morrow!"

"Very well, to-morrow then. Will you take a walk with me early?"

"Yes, I will. I should like to, Tony. Right after breakfast, before church."

"All right!" said he, "I will come for you." And then they were both silent until they reached her house.

"And don't talk or think any more nonsense about not trusting people, will you?" he added, as he said good-night.

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"No, Tony, I'll try not to!" she replied with unusual meekness.

He came for her at an early hour the next morning and she went out with him. It was a radiant morning. There had been an ice storm in the night; it had rained, and then had suddenly frozen, and now the sun was shining from a clear sky. Every branch and twig sparkled a welcome to the sun as it mounted higher, and the trees flashed out their colors—red and white against the blue of the heavens. It was as though they had hung out their flags. Others again were like gigantic Christmas trees strung with bright balls of green and red. The wires that stretched from pole to pole along the streets looked as if they were festooned with tiny lanterns, while across the river it was so grand a sight that Juliet caught her breath with wonder. With this exquisite world in which to live and love, why must nations fight, and men do wrong, and women say what is not true—one woman, whom she had trusted and believed in? But there was one person who would never fail her, she was sure, and he was with her now, walking beside her in this beautiful sparkling world—and he was speaking to her!

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"Juliet," he was saying, "I want you to listen to me, please. I have something to say to you, and I am glad I can say it to you here out of doors, and where it is all so still and wonderful. Of course war is going to be declared very soon—as soon as Congress assembles. There is no doubt now about that, and of course I shall go over—right away, probably. I suppose they will send some of us Plattsburg fellows among the first. I want to ask you something. That is why I came home just for these two days."

He hesitated for a moment. She knew what was coming, but his first question surprised her.

"I want to ask you something—and I hope you won't think me awfully fresh to do it—it's about your cousin."

"My cousin?" repeated Juliet. "Which cousin?"

"The one over in France—Phil Rufford."

"What about him? You haven't heard anything, have you, Tony? He hasn't been wounded, or—or—killed? Tell me quickly, Tony, if you have!"

"Oh, no, not that! Of course not! I haven't heard anything of that sort, but I did hear you

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were awfully good friends, and now I see that it is true. You—you are so cut up because——”

“Why, of course we are good friends! What in the world do you mean, Tony? Of course I was cut up when I thought you were going to tell me something had happened to Phil. I don’t see how I could be anything else. He is my own first cousin, and we are the best and most intimate friends. He has always been just like my own brother. We and the Ruffords are more like brothers and sisters than cousins. You know our mothers are sisters, and there has always been the greatest intimacy between our two families. Phil and I are very nearly the same age, and really he couldn’t be nearer to me or any dearer if he were my own brother.”

“Brother!” said Tony. “Then you are not engaged to him?”

“Engaged to him? I engaged to Phil? Oh, Tony, how silly! I would no more marry Phil, nor he want to marry me—why, it’s too ridiculous!” And she laughed at him openly.

“I’m mighty glad to hear you say so,” said Tony, “because — Oh, Juliet, you know I’m not much of a talker. I don’t know how to say things

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—but I hated to hear you might be engaged, or sometime going to be engaged, to your cousin, and I did hear it when I was at home the last time, and then that day we went off with the donkey and Elizabeth got hurt, you told me you had been writing to him, and something you said, and the way you said it made me think it might be true. Of course I understand now, for you have told me exactly how it is. I'm glad enough! You see I may be ordered off at any minute, and I wanted to be sure of—of something. It is this, Juliet, dear! I care for you most tremendously. I love you, and I want to know if—it is why I came home—to find out if you could possibly love me just a little? Could you?"

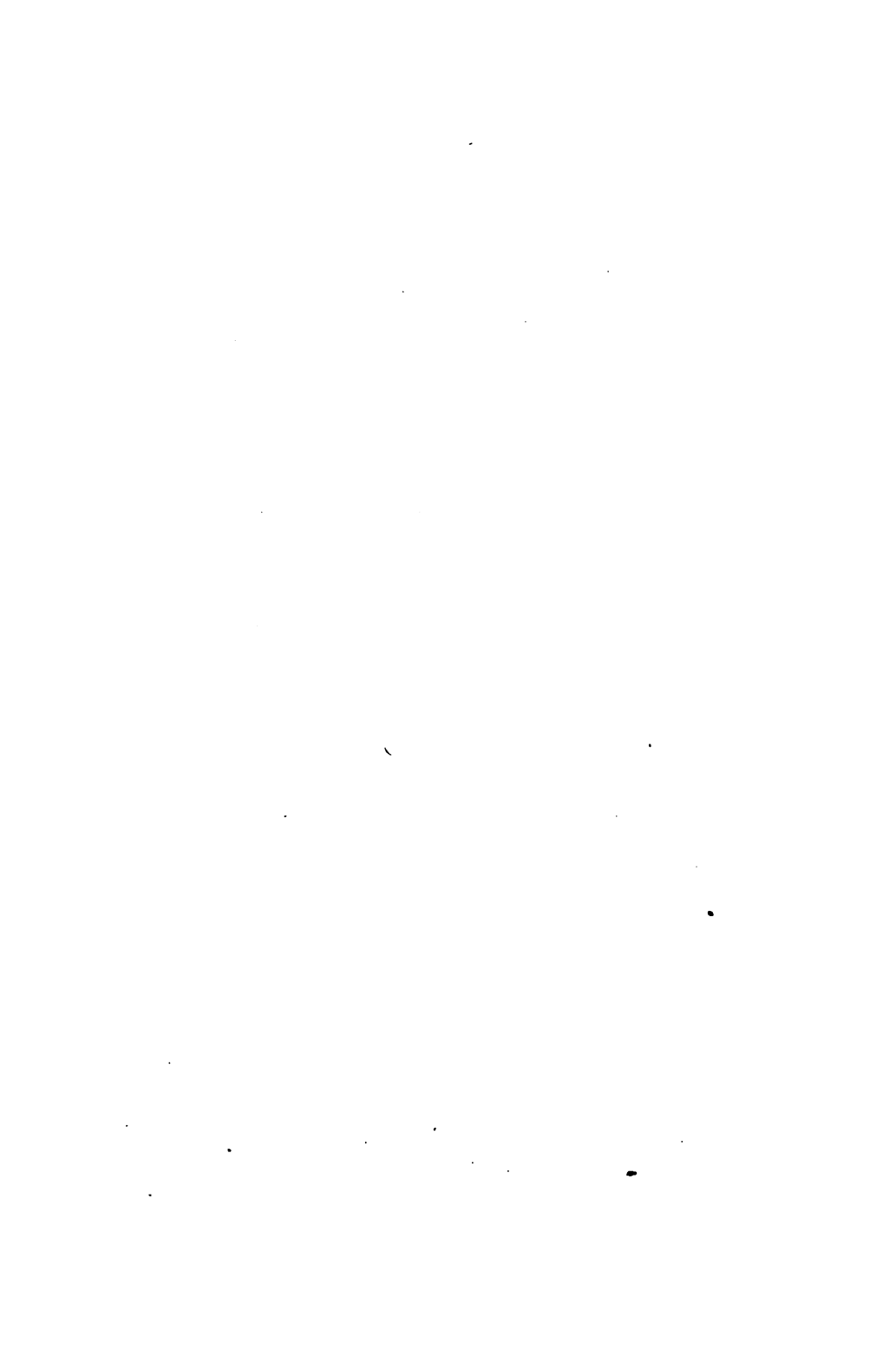
She stopped on the bridge, for they were crossing the river now, and turned to him.

"I—I don't believe I could, Tony—not just a little! Oh, don't look so, Tony dear! It is because I—I—could care a great deal! I do—care—a great deal! I didn't know until this minute how very much I do care!"

The sun shone, the trees and the bushes sparkled, and the world was a radiant place.

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